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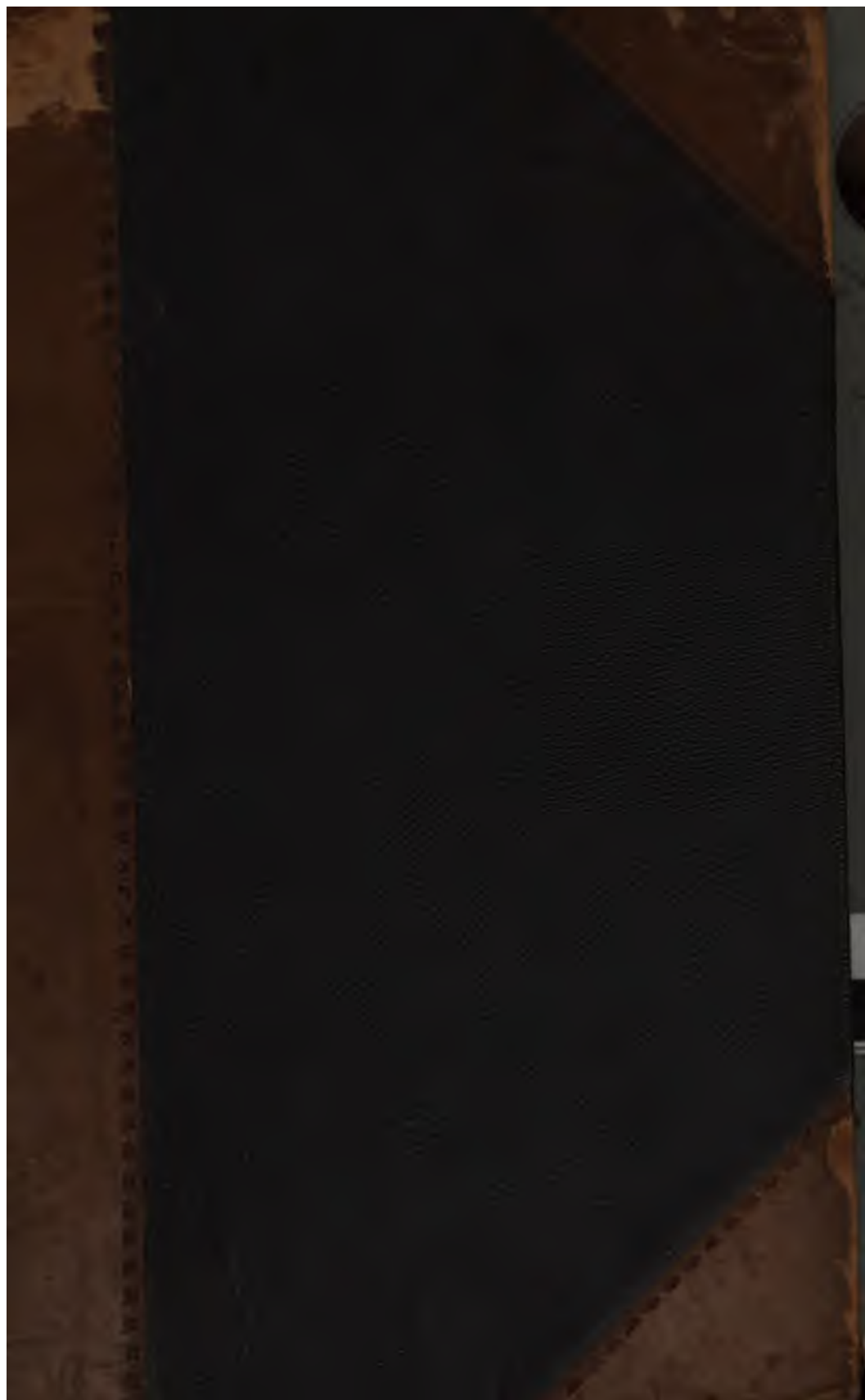
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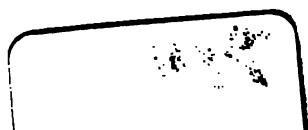
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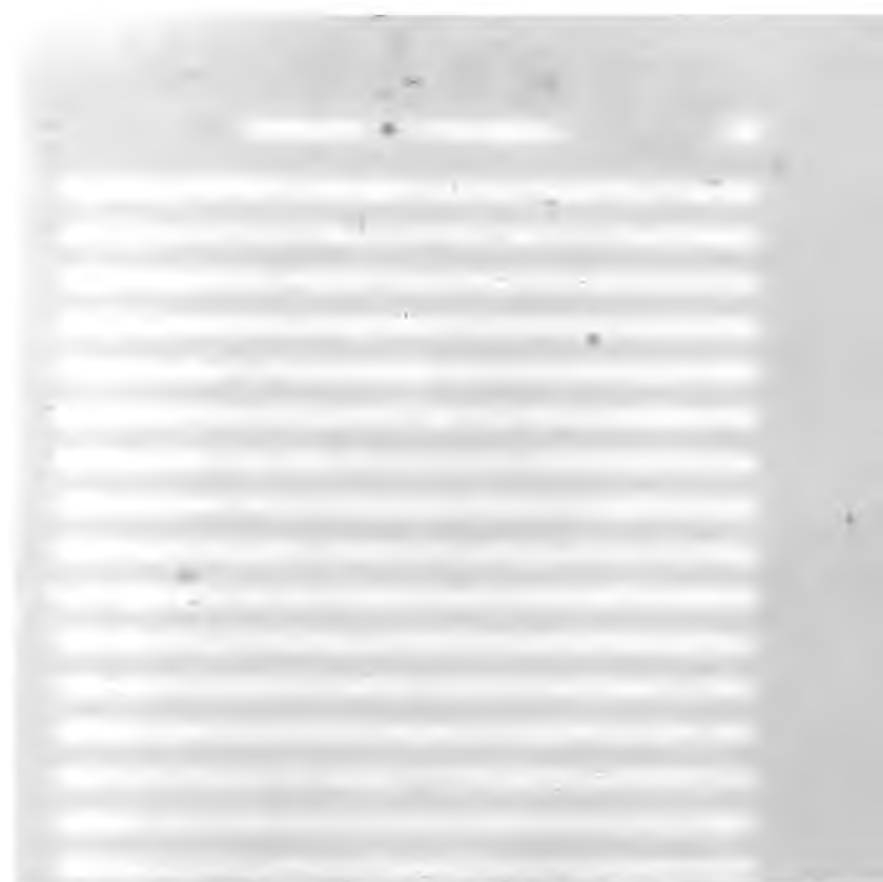




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MEMOIRS
OF
MIRABEAU:

BIOGRAPHICAL, LITERARY, AND POLITICAL.

BY HIMSELF,
HIS FATHER, HIS UNCLE, AND HIS ADOPTED CHILD.

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VOL. III.

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MEMOIRS OF MIRABEAU.

BOOK IX.

THE misfortune of which we gave an account at the end of the last book, did not depress Mirabeau's spirits. His mind was so constituted that it could readily combine good taste and facility in literary composition, with the most acute anxiety and suffering. Indeed, it was by such mental torture that he re-tempered his intellect, and gave it an increase of strength ; for the principle of its supernatural power lay in the violent passions he had derived from nature. The death of his child, therefore, stimulated him to fresh exertion, and the more so, no doubt, because he was conscious that this event had removed one of the chief obstacles to his release. He also knew that his mother was straining every nerve in his behalf, and this we are led to infer from a sarcasm of the Marquis.

“ I know not,” wrote the harsh father. “ what they

are plotting upon their dunghill, but thence springs forth all the phosphorescence of the moment*.”

Mirabeau now appeared less disposed to submit to the tedious forms of a lengthened negociation. He displayed symptoms of irritation and impatience, at which the sensitive prudence of the negociator, Dupont, took the alarm, and made him invoke Sophie's assistance.

“ I have,” he wrote to her, “ to oppose to your grief, in which I sincerely sympathise, an occupation that best becomes a heart like yours. Help me to save our friend ; and in order that we may do so, try to prevent him from ruining his cause by impatience. Like a man who has lost all hope, he talks to me of plans that I am sure will seriously injure him and deprive him of all resources. These plans cannot be attended with any success, and can give him only the pleasure, so little worthy of him, of inflicting pain upon those who have power over his fate. This is not the way to improve his condition. He enters into these unreasonable projects at the very time I have begun, and apparently on the strongest grounds, to hope for his release. He may thus destroy the fruit of my long exertions, and this annoys and grieves me. You must quiet him ; from your pen must flow persuasion and peace. If, in our counsels, we men state harsh truths, we resemble surgeons obliged

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 15th 1780.

to inflict torture to effect a cure ; but we have not the address to soften the pain. Providence has granted this power to your sex alone. Employ it then ; become a skilful physician, and by a mild system of treatment maintain the blood of our friend in the state of calmness necessary for my operation. Tell him that he will never have a more zealous friend than myself, one better able to judge of all circumstances connected with his case, or one more anxious to save him *."

As we have already stated, the Bailli had justified his nephew's letter (May 22nd), and the Marquis had accepted his brother's explanation.

" I am happy that you have found another sense for the follies which you mentioned in your last. For my own part, his fine words will produce no effect upon me, and as I shall not answer his letter, he will not write again. Let him take the proper road, that is all I can desire ; and provided I have it not upon my conscience that I turned his pursuit from myself to another person, I ask no more. But I shall always, as need may require, use the same consonants and the same vowels †."

Certain statements in favour of Mirabeau having appeared without his knowledge in many of the public

* Unpublished letter from Dupont de Nemaine to Sophie, dated June 19th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated July 29th 1780.

papers, he was apprehensive that it would prove a new ground of paternal animosity against him*.”

“ I yesterday saw Dupont, which I scarcely expected. He informed me that another case for my mother had been sent judicially to my father. In it I am very warmly, though very injudiciously, defended. This may do me a great deal of harm, if it were only from the annoyance it must occasion my father, and from its making him fear that if he liberated me it would appear to the public that he had yielded to force †.”

At the same time Mirabeau again wrote to his uncle, who, in proportion as he was secretly serving him, treated him with greater harshness.

“ However useless to you may be a correspondence with me, and however irksome I may consider it to refuse constantly all assistance to a man to whom, before even he was born, I had, in some degree, devoted my laborious life, I shall never add to your sorrows that of receiving from me no reply to your letters.

“ If age, reason, and reflection have produced in your bosom a repentance for your past misdeeds as deep as it ought to be, my lecturing you would be out of place. If, on the contrary, your present letters are not more deserving of my confidence than the verbal and written

* See “ Correspondence from Vincennes,” vol. iv. p. 221.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated July 18th 1780.

promises you have so often made to me, and never performed, still my lecturing you would be ridiculous as well as useless. Ask your own heart why your intentions are always looked upon by me with suspicion.

“ You must remember that, as you were walking with me in the great hall of this very castle, you gave me assurances, to which I replied, that if you deceived me, you would obtain your father’s pardon much easier than my confidence. It was on the strength of these assurances that (not to reproach you with what I have done for you) I brought about a reconciliation between you and your father. What man would then have told me that I had been working for one who would so soon belie my testimony? I confess that my endeavours on that occasion have produced effects so deplorable, not only to yourself but to your whole family, that I have no desire to involve myself a second time in your affairs.

“ You ask if it is ‘surprising that a man born of a respectable family is not a monster?’ True, it may be not very surprising; but there are excesses to which the fire of youth does not lead. Do not attribute what you are pleased to term your *deviations* to bad advice, for you have never taken advice.

“ It is because you are born of a family still more respectable in the purity of its morals and the antiquity of its honours (now-a-days turned into ridicule and

superseded by indulgence for vice) than in the other illusions of human nature, that you are more culpable ; for you had none but excellent domestic examples to follow.

“ You ask my advice : I have already given it to you. I have pointed out the persons whom it is necessary you should appease, for by them will the favours be dispensed which you may solicit.

“ But the best advice I can offer you, is to work at your own improvement. I must observe to you that the most disgusting pride continues to prevail in your letters, even where there is the strongest evidence of your attempts to conceal it. I cannot but perceive this in the reasons you assign for not writing to your father. Upon this particular point I can offer you no counsel, because, in his place, I should be disgusted at the very sight of your hand-writing.

“ In your effusions there is always a little mixture of threatening. You now threaten me with your despair. Try on the contrary to give the family and myself some hope of you, which, do not fancy that any of your letters have hitherto done. Pride, I repeat, and a spirit of independence, pierce through the honeyed words with which you cover them.

“ In another of your letters you say that ‘ one *lettre de cachet* is as good as another.’ This would be true for any one but yourself ;—but have you not twice

broken your ban, and, each time, to commit an action which you call a *deviation*, but to which others do not apply so indulgent a term?

“ In the letter I am now answering, I know not whether you ever wished to take the trouble to conceal your pride. ‘ It behoves me,’ you say, ‘ to be candid in my avowal of the wrongs I have committed ; but am I to be mean in my supplications?’ The whole sentence is tainted with the most detestable pride. ‘ If,’ you say, ‘ the form of my entreaties has any thing mean, I ought to be improved and corrected by reflection, and not debased by misfortune.’ You then ask me if you are wrong in thinking thus.

“ Yes, you are wrong ; not for not suffering yourself to be debased by misfortune, if you were only unfortunate. But it would surely not be debasing yourself to acknowledge your faults, and throw yourself upon the kindness of a father, a father-in-law, and a young wife, each of whom you have cruelly offended. It is by what you term your *deviations* that you are really debased. The haughty air with which you ask for pardon is a further offence.

“ I repeat that I have pointed out the only means that can be useful to you. But I advise you to persuade yourself that you are guilty of very grievous faults, and that up to the present time you do not seem convinced of it. Such conviction might make your style less offensive than it is at present ; for you

must be aware that what would be a matter of course in a man perfectly guiltless, becomes offensive in one who has respected nobody, outraged his nearest of kin, and violated that which ought ever to be held in respect*.”

Prior to receiving this severe letter, Mirabeau had written as follows :—

“God bless you, my dear and kind uncle, who have given me such prudent and useful advice. To you am I indebted for having persevered with Madame de Mirabeau :—not because I was not fully sensible of all the wrongs I had inflicted upon her, and was sincerely anxious to repair them so far as lay in my power. But when I humbled myself to my wife—when I implored her assistance and received no reply from her, I was more than once ready to yield to the disgust inspired by such a situation, in which, what I had left of pride, struggled against my sense of justice.

“But he, in whom a prudent and good man takes interest, cannot be lost. Your lessons, your advice, and even your censure, often harsh in form, but in which your humanity and tenderness are evident, have kept up my courage and excited my gratitude. I have persevered, as it was doubtless right I should ; but to you I am indebted for having done as I ought ; and

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Mirabeau, dated July 17th 1780.

thanks to Providence and to you, this has not been so unfruitful as I had reason to fear.

“Madame de Mirabeau has just written to me that she pities my situation, and is desirous I should be happy ; and that, as I think her solicitations may succeed with my father, she will use them. I am much affected at this mark of kindness on her part. I am grateful for it on her own account, on her father’s account, and on your account, my dear uncle. If you will condescend to second her endeavours, I doubt not that you will raise your nephew from the grave, and restore to my father a son who dares not fall at his feet.

“How anxious am I, my dear uncle, that my future conduct shall be as worthy of you as my gratitude is proportionate to your goodness. I must try to justify this goodness, but I do not flatter myself with success. I will, however, perish in the attempt*.”

At the same time Mirabeau wrote to his wife, who had now become the arbitress of his release. We do not insert the letter, because it has been given elsewhere, though in a garbled form†.

It was affecting, and made an unusual impression, for it was praised by the Marquis of Mirabeau, as will appear in the following extract :—

“I am surprised at his turning round in that letter

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to the Bailli, dated July 16th 1780.

† Peuchet, vol. i. p. 509.

—a thing I did not expect from him. The letter appears to me well written, noble, clever, and equitable. This is the first time I have seen anything in him like true sensibility. In this production his pride bends and becomes dignity. What a singular and fantastic personage!—mad in excess of pride—mad in turbulence, and ardour, and unsociableness—mad by a physically overwrought mind, and capable of acts of madness in good as well as in evil; not having a positively bad heart, not unkind—even the reverse, but who, presuming wholly upon his own resources, has no more nerve than a slug, and no more energy of mind than a bill-sticker*.”

“Do you see him with his bathos, specious enough, at least this time—do you see this babe of thirty years of age, over whom time hath passed like a saw through a beam, tearing, heating, reducing, flattening — this man, who is nothing but thorough pride, and who, if you take his pride from him, is nothing but a burst soap-bubble? Take heed, moreover, that he will not correct himself of the vice of pride: all his letters stink of it. Turbulence might remain, but we shall see whether his madness remains entire. Whatever happens, we must adopt, with regard to this man, carelessness of heart, and non-occupation of mind. Thus shall

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 12th 1780.

I remain. In other respects, he is of the race necessary for the age in which he lives ; and, as the Duchess of Civrac said to me, he is likely to climb upon the backs of all of them*.”

Dupont also found the letter “clever,” whilst Boucher praised the noble and candid spirit that pervaded it. Mirabeau rejected the compliment of the former, and accepted only that of the latter.

“Your simplicity, as you term it, is always sure to defeat a finessing spirit, because with great powers of mind yourself, acknowledged even by Dupont, who is very fastidious in this respect, and says that M. Lenoir has no other talents but yours, you have that rectitude of heart which leads you to prefer the shortest road, which is always the straightest. Artifice of disposition is often nothing more than the result of the fixed and persevering attention of an ordinary intellect acted upon by personal interest. Artifice may indicate intellect, but I think I have observed that it never exists in intellect of a superior order, unless accompanied with meanness of heart. A man of superior mind disdains little means : he has recourse only to the greater, that is to say, the most simple. Artifice, in fine, is a lie in action ; and the falsehood springs from fear and personal interest, and consequently from meanness. But

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 13th 1780.

Dupont is candid by nature, and artful from precaution ; he has perhaps not sufficient energy of mind for the intellect he possesses*.”

To put his nephew to further trial, the Bailli continued to write to him in severe terms. Was this artifice, or the result of conviction? We cannot say to a certainty ; but we are disposed to attribute it to conviction, because nine years prior to this period, the Bailli thus wrote to Mirabeau :—

“ You have found me indulgent and forgiving ; do not from this draw a premature conclusion, but remember that if ever your father has again reason to complain of you, I shall be as strong an advocate against as I have been for you, and he will pardon you sooner than I shall†.”

The following is an extract from the Bailli’s last letter :—

“ I cannot affirm that your wife will not find more talent than feeling in your letter. For my own part, I will not conceal from you, that in all you say flattering to myself, I cannot but detect a fund of pride which makes you find my censure very often harsh in form. If Heaven ever grants that you return to good, you will think otherwise.

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated July 27th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Mirabeau, dated May 4th 1771.

“Look into your conscience, and see if my advice was worth being attended to. Judge me abstractedly, and without reference to the reputation which you found me enjoying in the narrow circle to which Providence, justified by the small sum of talent I possess, had confined me. Separate from me what the world may have added to this reputation whenever I was mentioned to you : still you will find me an honest man, who has injured no one, and, in reward of this, enjoys public esteem. Now, I have acquired this esteem by never swerving, any more at least than human weakness compelled me to do, from that rule which I have always taken as the principle of my conduct—*Alteri ne feceris quod tibi fieri non vis*. But I am writing too much about myself: permit me, however, to add that I have even attempted to strike out the two negatives, and to do, whenever I was able, that which I wished should be done unto me.

“Probe your own heart, and examine whether the honour, the peace, nay, the life of others, are not things which every honest man should respect. Next examine whether your pride did not make you feel pleasure, and even affect a sort of glory in shining at the expense of others; and whether you have respected the honour and the good of your neighbour.

“You do not appear to me sensible of the enormity of your faults. The enemies which your father has made by his works, in which he has attacked nothing

but abuses, and always respected individuals, would be afraid, in the face of the public, to avow themselves his foes. Your mad fury has rendered you the instrument of their vengeance. I repeat to you that you do not appear to me as sensible as you ought to be of the full extent of your guilt.

“I also repeat that I dare not, nor shall I ever dare to become your security with your father, your wife, and your father-in-law*.”

These letters greatly affected Mirabeau, especially the one dated July 17th. This had crossed his written the day before, and which obtained his father's approbation. His feelings on this occasion appear in the following reply :—

“Dear, good, compassionate, generous, but this once unjust uncle, I received your letter dated July 17th. It reached me at a moment when my soul was beginning to smile at the first beam of hope, and my expanding and grateful heart had brought me to the feet of my assisting wife, to your own, and to those of her father and my own. When I was becoming a better man because I felt myself less unhappy—when I was assuming a new existence, for which the hands of justice and repentance were occupied in forming a new soul, your letter came; it shall not destroy my reso-

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Mirabeau, dated July 27th 1780.

lutions, though it forms a cruel contrast with them. It is the fruit of my past transgressions ; its juice is bitter and disheartening ; but I despair and drink.

“ A reply to it is, however, due from me, and I will write my reply at this very time, when I am afflicted with fever, and an inflammation of the face has absolutely closed one of my eyes. I will write it, without order, in those points that grieve me most ; and I will write it artlessly. You may scold me again if you please, but I will show you the naked heart of your nephew. It is he who seeks for that pardon which he would fain deserve—he and no one else. He has no pretensions to perfection, nor has he a right to set up any ; but he has a right to show himself straightforward and sincere. If, such as he is, you are of opinion that he deserves death, very well, my dear uncle, he will die—that’s all. He will die with feelings of the most painful regret for his faults towards his father, and the grief he has occasioned you ; but regretting none of the steps he has taken to save himself, and for which you will condemn him. By an act of candour which has displeased you, but for which he thought you would have esteemed him, he refrained from deceiving you. He threw himself into your arms, because he knows your kindness of heart to be inexhaustible, and he sued for pardon because he felt that he was guilty. Had he not felt this, think you, dear uncle, that he would have

remained much more unhappy than he is at present without uttering a word?

“I ought not, you say, to attribute to bad advice the faults that constitute my disgrace and misfortune because I have never taken advice. I am aware, my dear uncle, that bad advice could not justify me; but were I capable of being excused it might excuse me. But I do not excuse myself: I implore mercy, and my present pride is a will to make atonement. Would you stifle this pride?

“I have *taken* very little advice, it is true, but I have *received* a great deal. I have received it, too, charged with every possible temptation, and combined with recitals calculated to inflame and poison a mind without experience, and a suffering heart. These counsels threw me into a cruel delirium, and my blows fell upon others as upon myself. As I inflicted them I grieved; and now that my eyes are more open, I grieve still more. Therefore, I do not defend myself; I only supplicate.

“But I entreat, above all things, that feelings may not be attributed to me which I do not possess. Let none of the faults be imputed to me that are repulsive to my heart; those of which I am really guilty are quite sufficient.

“Whenever I have made protestations to you, they have been sincere; and may God preserve you

from ever being so angry, as I am profoundly afflicted at the circumstances that have made me swerve from them in spite of myself.

“ I have been culpable, my dear uncle, but I am so no longer, for my heart is wholly imbued with good and virtuous feelings. I have been guilty, but am not corrupt, for I am not debased. The love I feel for the nobler virtues, you may term pride if you will; and I admit that I never was less likely to be corrected of such pride.

“ I have thought it right not to mix anything with my prayers and supplications. I was bound to state my sufferings to my wife, so as to leave her all the credit of coming to my relief from her own generosity. She has obtained that credit, dear uncle, and why should it excite your envy?

“ Why would you have me weep like a coward, at what I endure; and with my father, and my father-in-law, and my wife, bear only the appearance of a man who has not courage to suffer that which, after all, he has deserved to suffer? I shall do no such thing. Pain and death shall not induce me to pronounce a word of weakness. It is only when I am beyond these walls, if ever I leave them; it is only when people can no longer think that interest guides my pen and my tongue, that I shall and ought to humble myself.

“ I most sincerely repent; and be assured, dear uncle, that my repentance must be great indeed for me, in my present state of misfortune, to confess it, as I do, to every body. Be assured, likewise, that gratitude drives repentance much deeper into a heart than vengeance does.

“ Pardon my having been deeply pained by several passages in your letter; but allow me to state, in the overflowing of my heart, how much I was affected by a sentence in which yours speaks. Excellent man!— you possess all my veneration and all my tenderness. You find it tiresome, you say, constantly to refuse all aid to a man to whom, even before he was born, you had dedicated your laborious life. You will not add to my sorrow that of having no reply from you to my letters! My tears fell fast upon this part of your letter as I read it. Oh, my dear uncle, I fully appreciate your kindness and sacrifices. How strongly am I bound to dedicate to you my second life, after your having so often granted me aid, and after my second father has restored to me my first.

“ This is the sole object of my ambition. My life is now too far advanced for me to aim at great success; but I can still fulfil domestic duties, and I thirst after them. I require indulgence and a little esteem. To deserve these I shall apply that which, had I been more prudent, I should have devoted to a more lofty

career. I might have been greater, but my faults will make me better; my having to make people forget them is a powerful stimulus.

“The more I see a hope of this, the more eager I become. Madame de Mirabeau’s interference changes my situation. If I could move her, when I was bound to her by no debt of gratitude, I must move her more when my heart is under the excitement caused by her kindness. Will you allow her alone to sue for me? I trust not. I flatter myself that, notwithstanding your cruel and so often-repeated *but*, you are convinced of my repentance. Oh! convince also my father. Restore to me a portion of his kindness; I prefer it to freedom, rank, fortune—every thing: I place your friendship alone in the same parallel*.”

This appeal made a strong impression upon the Bailli.

“Your letter,” was his reply, “begins with three epithets which I have used every effort to deserve, without ever having dared to hope that I had succeeded. But I surely never deserved the fourth. God knows that I never asked him for anything with greater fervour than not to be unjust; and in this respect I flatter myself that my prayer has been granted, so far as human weakness can correspond with heavenly

* Unpublished Letter from Mirabeau to the Bailli, dated August 12th 1780.

grace. I will further add, that you should be the last person to consider me unjust.

“ I have already informed you, and you have yourself remarked, that I am far from wishing to add to your misfortunes. This stops and greatly impedes my pen. Nevertheless, you make me feel that I have clouded the beam of hope which shone brightly before you. I will not overwhelm you ; neither will I give you hopes that I cannot realise.

“ I have pointed out to you the only means by which you can obtain relief : this is all I can do. If you possessed in a less degree the art of persuasion, you would persuade me to do more. You know me well enough to be aware that my heart is not formed to be either severe or mistrustful ; but you have forced it to mistrust you ; and you have compelled your father to overcome his goodness, and even a predilection, perhaps too strong in your favour. How often have you before made the very same protestations !

“ Far from opposing anything that may be done in your favour, I repeat to you that I have pointed out the only means by which you can obtain any relief. I can do no more. It would be highly imprudent on my part to offer myself to your father as security for your future conduct ; and I cannot really intercede without charging myself with the consequences.

“ You may look upon what I write as reproaches ; yet, if you take it as it is meant, you will think other-

wise. There is too much cleverness in your letters for the heart to play a principal part, and yet the heart alone can deserve the epithets of *straightforward* and *sincere*.

“ I want no answer to the question I am about to ask you, because any concealment would vex me, and true repentance never conceals anything. Answer the question to yourself, as you are suffering the punishment which you admit you have deserved,—would you dare to confess to your father. and to me who have no right over you, everything that you have done, every letter that you have written? Nobody imputes to you faults which you have not committed. I here stop, for I do not wish to distress you. Of this you may be assured,—you mistake yourself, and confound pride with greatness of soul.

“ I conclude with repeating, though I regret doing so, what I once before said : that it is irksome to be constantly refusing all assistance to one to whom, even before he was born, I had dedicated all that I could do *.”

At the very time the Bailli was writing this last letter, Mirabeau was renewing his touching appeals.

“ I hope,” he wrote to his uncle, “ that you will be more and more satisfied with me. Pain, privation, and

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Mirabeau, dated August 18th 1780.

me without your having poured a drop of balm into the wound. But it is the perpetual and painful *but*, which always pervades your remonstrances, that brings despair into my heart, because by all my thoughts and feelings—by all that I have of life and perception, I am told that it is unjust.

“ You are anxious that my conversion should be full and complete. • That of the heart is just as you wish. That of my sayings and actions are still impeded by my situation ; nor can it be otherwise where I am ; but the consolation you afford me helps on its progress. I must, however, tell you, that although I have committed very blameable actions, I have never had a corrupt heart. It has been misled by passions greatly to be lamented, and these have been fomented by a mind seduced, soured, and irritated.

“ I much regret that you dare not become my pledge, and the more so because I feel that I should do you justice—my plan of conduct being to give myself up wholly to your counsels. Experience has taught me that they alone would always have been useful to me.

“ But if you dare not become security for me, who will? I think that to you alone of the family, am I known. Whether you consent or whether you refuse to be my pledge, I shall not the less follow your advice, nor conceive myself less bound to act as if I lay under this additional obligation to you.

“ You see that there is nothing in my existence to

repentance. I have not been withheld by false shame. When a man has done wrong, nothing noble remains but the avowal and the pardon ; but neither is noble if the guilty man acts with a knife at his throat. I have often thought of forming a resolution to die—and to do so with the regret of having made no atonement—of not even having shown to its full extent the tormenting wish I had of making atonement. This resolution I have often thought of forming, rather than be suspected of cowardice, of baseness, of being unable to bear my burthen, or of becoming supple from interested motives.

“ The step taken by my wife and your letters are beginning to relieve me from such thoughts. They show me from afar the day when I can publicly appear in accord with myself, and when, by saying all I think, and doing all in my power to please those who have reason to complain of me, I shall have no reason to fear being suspected of base motives for a change of conduct. These hopes have already relaxed the rigidity of my disposition, which they have both softened and improved. Like a craw-fish, I am casting my old shell to appear in a new skin ; but this effect has been produced only by the mildness of spring—it could never have been effected by the severity of winter.

“ It is not your *scolding* in itself that appears *harsh* ; you, especially, may scold me much more harshly without my taking it amiss. Your justice has never stricken

continue to better yourself, for I cannot conceal from you that the chances are in your favour *."

Mirabeau had not waited for this advice, but had already written to his sister, Madame du Saillant, the only one of the family who had constantly resided with the Marquis. This lady had never once incurred her father's displeasure even for an instant, which is to be attributed to her own happy disposition and amiable temper, as well as to the mildness and prudence of her husband, and to the services he had rendered his father-in-law, who esteemed him accordingly.

We insert Mirabeau's letter.

"It must surely be known to you, my dear sister, that my wife has written to my father to intreat him to mitigate my sufferings, and in the hope of obtaining for me, from his clemency and humanity, a half freedom at least, for which I shall be as grateful as I am sincerely and deeply repentant of the faults that have placed me within the gloomy walls whence I now write.

"I trust that this circumstance has afforded you some pleasure. I have had so many proofs of your goodness of heart, that, in the agonies which mine has suffered, I have wished a thousand times that the rest

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Mirabeau, dated August 18th 1780.

of the family were like you. But you are the only one of whom my father has never had reason to complain, and who have never injured yourself nor any one else. I have been less fortunate : easy of access and proud, of a feeling heart, but choleric, imprudent, thoughtless, my errors drew upon me misfortunes which, joined to insidious suggestions, irritated my mind, and rendered me deserving of what I have endured.

“ In a gloomy prison, in a long and tedious solitude, and under the burthen of the grief and infirmities they have brought upon me, a tardy reason has at length enlightened my mind. I carried its first homage to the feet of my father, my uncle, my wife, and my father-in-law ; but, for a considerable time, this was of no avail, and, so long as I remained without hope, I was unwilling to communicate my sufferings to a beloved and compassionate sister. But now that Madame de Mirabeau has begun to lend me her aid, I know you sufficiently to be persuaded that you will not refuse to co-operate in my behalf. Among my numerous faults, I have never committed that, my dear sister, of refusing to do you justice ; and I have always tenderly loved you. I had been set against your husband, and I had the misfortune to yield, with all the impetuosity I then possessed, to every evil suggestion made against him. I deeply regret this ; but I think him of too noble a disposition to keep up his resentment

against an unhappy brother-in-law in misfortune, who was deceived, laments having been so, has returned to his duty, is corrected, and repents of the past. Should he join with you in rendering me assistance, like yourself and your sister-in-law, he would have the most honourable claim to my gratitude, the obligations of which it shall be my delight to fulfil.

“ The real service I require is, that all those who do some sort of justice to my repentance and my honour, will try also to obtain a place for me in my father’s affection. This, of all my wants, affects me the most, and is the most imperious. True I do not deserve it, and have lost the right to it given me by nature ; but I have not lost the desire of having it restored to me. I feel the privation of it dreadfully, and I will die rather than not reconquer my father’s regard. In this place, I cannot advance towards the accomplishment of my desire ; in this place, where a bad construction is put upon every becoming sentiment that I utter, I can do nothing good or useful. All that I feel is disavowed. Help me then, dearest sister, to leave these walls ; and if my future conduct one day makes my father forget the past, you will have conferred a benefit not only upon me but upon himself. His heart is not formed for hatred ; mine loves him, and bleeds at his feet. Take pity upon me. I will kiss the hand you stretch forth to me, and also that which you place upon his

bosom when supplicating in behalf of your unhappy brother *."

After a very long silence, and the most unjust suspicions and complaints against a sister who had never deserved them, the above letter was a reparation due to Madame du Saillant.

"You do me justice, my dear brother," was her reply, "in supposing that I have derived great pleasure from seeing your excellent wife interceding with my father to obtain some mitigation of your misfortunes. This was the surest way to be of service to you, for she is the most powerful mediatrix you could have. I am no less touched at the mark of confidence you have just given me by conferring upon me the right of being useful to you. It proves that you do me justice, and that you do not reject the affection for you which would have made me fly to the assistance of an unhappy brother, could I have done so in spite of himself.

"I should do the greatest injustice to my husband if I allowed anything to be attributed to myself that proceeded from his mind and noble heart. All that he has done at any time, or wished to do for my brothers, with a zeal and warmth not habitual to his outward disposition, but belonging to his heart, originated entirely with himself. He is equally incapable of

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated August 13th 1780.

inflicting and of suffering an injury; and I have seen him much affected at being the object of a public accusation*, which, without proceeding from you, appeared not unknown to you, for your defence was there taken. As we had never mentioned the subject to each other, I had reason to fear that, from regard for me, he concealed the resentment he felt. Never having, however, used any other artifice with each other than that of concealing nothing from one another, and being unable to hide my emotion on receiving a letter from my heretofore lost brother, I took it to him immediately, and his reply was to offer his own house as the place of trial, and his presence as security. Thus all is told with reference to him. He is no less desirous than I am of having it in his power to contribute in making you happier, and of seeing you persuaded that the feelings of both are the same. By this post I shall write to my uncle and to my sister-in-law, according to the dictates of my feelings, urging them to concert measures to do you a real service, as well with her father as with ours, whose heart, blighted for a long time past by intense grief, would easily revive at the first ray of confidence by which it was penetrated. I alone could not bring about so happy a revolution. I anxiously

* This is an allusion to some very violent passages in the Cases and Statements published on behalf of the Marchioness of Mirabeau.

wish and hope for it, from your present feelings and the conduct you intend to pursue in future. We cannot yet bring forward, in support of our application to him, any meritorious act you may have performed; but we must trust to his goodness and beneficent justice. At all events, be assured that I would purchase, at the expense of my blood, the certainty of your happiness, the renewal of peace in our family, and the satisfaction of our excellent father*.”

Mirabeau, delighted with this reply, lost no time in writing to his sister a second letter, to which the Marquis applied the term *ecstatic*.

“ I yield to the overflowings of my heart, and shall call you, as you call me, my tender, amiable, and excellent sister. Your letter has kindled in me the deepest emotion, and, for the first time after a long and cruel interval, I have shed tears of joy. I thought their source dried up in me: intense pain produces none, remorse and sorrow produce none; the emotion that draws them forth is a salutary one. I fully expected that you would restore to me some part of your affection, but not the whole, as you have done. You are right, my kind sister; to have done it partially would not have been worthy of you. I am your brother, and am penitent and unfortunate. But I was

* Unpublished Letter from Madame du Saillant to Mirabeau, dated August 23rd 1780.

not the brother of your husband (but I will and ought to be so); therefore his conduct is most noble. I must confess to you, that he has as deeply affected as he has surprised me; not that I thought him below himself, but I never was so fully conscious of the wrongs I had inflicted upon him as at the moment he forgot them.

“ My dear, kind sister, throw yourself into his arms, and say to him—you may easily guess what. Oh! how much shall I gain by having such an interpreter as yourself. Tell him more especially that if I do not write to him he would do me a horrible injustice by attributing it to any other feelings than those due to him from me, and to the awkwardness of expressing them after events so difficult and so cruel to allude to at present. I have stated this to the dear and valued friend* who has led me to the feet of my family. Repentance pleases me, but excuses pain and embarrass me. How could I efface all traces of my faults, if, by avowing, I constantly recal them to mind? I would embrace the knees of all, and my eyes alone should speak: every one would then be satisfied, persuaded, convinced !

“ I know not, dear sister, what will be the success of the negotiation in which you have the generosity to

* Dupont de Nemours.

concur ; but this I know, I could not have a more amiable mediatrix, one dearer to my father, or more according to his own heart. I further know that your letter, the step you have taken, and the kindness of your husband, give you both an eternal claim upon me—a claim more sacred than even that of nature ; and you cannot either of you deem me so perverse, as to warrant your fearing that I shall ever cease to respect such a claim.

“ A man of your own blood, dear sister,—a man warmed by your kindness, and whose mind has been formed by such sad experience, will not belie your pledge, if you dare venture to give it in his behalf. For my own part, I should be proud to have for my *guard* and mentor, my elder (be not offended !) and excellent sister, who, amid so many tempests, never despaired of my salvation, nor of my honour, nor of my resolutions ; who gives me so many marks of tender affection, although I have deeply wronged her, and who will say some day,—‘ I opened our father’s heart towards him ; I have converted and saved him. Is it strange, therefore, that he should love us, and behave well ?’

“ My dear sister, complete your kindness, and give me news of my father—of that father to whom I dare not write, and whom I have never loved so dearly as since I have been deprived of the right of telling him so. Tell me what effect my letters produce upon

him. Criticise and advise me. Assume, in short, the direction of my case, since you are so kind as to serve and treat as a brother an unhappy being, who will ever feel it an honour to be indebted to you, and to cherish and respect you*.”

Meanwhile, Mirabeau continued to write to his uncle, whose letters we cease to transcribe, or even to give the substance of, because they offer little more than repetitions of what the reader has already seen.

The following is one of Mirabeau's letters :—

“ I have received your two letters of the 18th and 28th of August, and I confess that, if I did not believe and attend to what you say in them, discouragement would deprive me of the power of replying ; but I attend to and believe in the dictates of your heart.

“ You always calculate my future conduct by my past errors. Now is it possible that I can ever return to the same age ? Is it possible I can ever find myself similarly situated ? Is it possible that so many misfortunes and so long a captivity can have been of no use to me ?

“ In a situation like that into which I have been thrown for several years past, a man becomes either prudent or entirely mad. I surely am not the latter, and have never felt further removed from it. My

Unpublished Letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated August 30th 1780.

becoming so would not, however, be impossible, if, after the ray of hope that has shone before me, I were thrown back for ever into despair. But which of my relatives, which of my natural protectors, can consent that I should be driven back when I am striving to do something praiseworthy; that I should be condemned to die in despair, deprived, perhaps, of reason?"....

"You are not this relative, neither is my father. I have the strongest reasons for believing that this noble and benevolent parent is secretly holding out to me a helping hand*; that his prudent goodness has long been placing the signal light upon the shore, near which I am struggling against rocks and billows. If ever I succeed in reaching that shore, he and you will have principally contributed to save me, and I shall more than twice be indebted to him for existence.

"I can never believe that my kind uncle sees without emotion or interest the change which his advice and my repentance have produced in my situation, and the hopes to which they have given birth. I no longer ask you alone to be my security: my wife my sister, my brother-in-law, and my friend are pleading in my behalf. They think, no doubt, that I shall not disgrace their recommendations, since they grant

* Mirabeau rightly guessed that Madame du Saillant's letters, which were written under the eyes of the Marquis, were written under his dictation also.

them to me. You, my dear uncle, need only yield with the others, and draw them on by the force of your example. The example of pardon is so noble!

“ You reproach me always with my letters being ‘too clever.’ I have great difficulty in believing this; and God forbid that I should attempt to make them so! I write much more from my heart than from my head, and I only endeavour to express clearly my thoughts and feelings. I might do so with more warmth, but people have a justifiable prejudice against such warmth. Be that as it may, I lament my errors. I wish them to be forgotten, and I will atone for them if possible. I love to be under obligations to my father, my wife, yourself, and all those I have offended*.”

Notwithstanding these submissive and affecting letters, Dupont was still alarmed. Boucher kept up Mirabeau’s courage.

“ My friend,” wrote Boucher, “a man ought always to appear a man; and at your age you must not speak like a blubbing school-boy, who is made to say, ‘I will do so no more†.’”

The Bailli continued timidly to urge his brother in

* Unpublished Letter from Mirabeau to the Bailli, dated 12th September 1780.

† Unpublished Letter from Boucher to Mirabeau, dated 2nd August 1780,

Mirabeau's favour, professing at the same time that he would offer no advice on the subject.

"This man," he says, "is much less of an actor than I supposed, notwithstanding his talent for performing parts. It appears to me that misfortune has corrected him, and he is repentant. He is almost the only pivot upon which his family turns: to leave him there would be to annihilate your race, and the idea of its destruction is dreadful to me. He has grievously erred, but he has also been punished. It is for you to weigh all this in your mind*."

"I have received another letter from the Count, who is assuredly one of the deepest fellows I know. He will take no denial, and has got it into his head, notwithstanding all I can say to the contrary, that I am always to be his confidant, and security for his good behaviour. The mode he employs is by no means a bad one, and I am obliged to take great care lest I should accede to his wishes†."

"The Count has sent me a copy of his letter to you. I see that the fellow now throws himself upon you, and tries to persuade himself that you are the accomplice of Saillanette (Madame du Saillant), without

* Unpublished Letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated September 10th 1780.

† Unpublished Letter from the same to the same, dated September 10th 1780.

wishing to appear so. He evidently hopes to make you so by degrees ; and, to tell you the truth, I do not blame him, for it is natural he should try to get out of his cage. But I find that he is too clever, and I should fear that the heart plays but a secondary part*.”

We insert the letter to the Bailli to which the latter here alludes.

“ I have the honour to send you a copy of the letter which I have received from my sister, Madame du Saillant. It gave me extreme pleasure ; I owe it to your kindness to tell you so, and my heart loves to pour into your bosom the pleasures it receives. You who have listened to the tale of my sufferings—whose courageous and tender reason has enlightened my path, purified my mind, and guided my footsteps,—will rejoice to see your good work prosper.

“ I venture to assure you that the work you have wrought in my bosom prospers even more than your generous endeavours to improve my situation.

“ A thought has arisen in my mind and makes my heart beat, for it is encouraged by several passages in your letters : it is that you consult with my father, and that he takes some share in the advice which, it is true, you would have given me without his aid, but

* Unpublished Letter from the same to the same, dated September 12th 1780.

which is only dearer to me for coming from both of you. If I am not wrong in this pleasing conjecture, suppose and reply that your nephew has more feeling, repentance, gratitude, and love than you could have supposed. All these feelings which I owe to my father, have I not acquired through you likewise? Have I not two fathers? My heart proclaims it, and it is confirmed by my moistened eyes *."

This consoling supposition was not incorrect: though, slowly, the Marquis had advanced a step.

"I remark," he wrote to the Bailli, "and without saying a word, the system of that madman. He hits as hard as he can, when he is *making style*. You know that the tender and the beautiful are synonymous in these times. He is acting, and, perhaps, deceives himself even the first. If he were asked what he means by *atonement*, and his plans tending thereto—supposing him sincere—he would state very well those by which he might resume his situation in life—those regarding his wife, he would state the wrong way; beyond this, he would talk and act like a madman †."

"If you call re-uniting the husband and wife the point to which I should not be sorry for being urged, I

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to the Bailli, dated September 1st 1780.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Bailli, dated September 1st 1780.

think with you, that it is at their own risk, peril, and fortune. But the greater the influence I might possess in it, the greater regret I should feel had I given any other impetus towards this object than stating, when the matter was mentioned to me, what I conceived to be good sense. At present I have not to give my reflections any great turn-about, for I had foreseen all; and when the letter to his sister came, I had a sort of female sedition around me — for women are always prompt to hope, and to pass emotion from hand to hand, as the money given by the courier is handed from postilion to postilion, without inquiring whence it comes, whither it is going, what is its amount, and how long it will last *.”

Thus the plan conceived by the Marquis of Mirabeau began to be unfolded; for he had hitherto concealed it even from his brother, for whom, nevertheless, he had the tenderest affection, and in whom he placed the greatest confidence. The whole project was at length explained in the following letter:—

“ When, after the loss of our poor little Victor, it was necessary that I should turn round, though pressed upon by the hand of Providence, you said enough to convince me that, although you appeared occupied solely about me, you thought and felt as I did concern-

* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated September 4th 1780.

ing the extinction of our race; for, notwithstanding we reason ourselves into submission and resignation, the impression remains and cannot be effaced. I long reflected upon the matter. It is certain that if my grandson had lived, I should never have swerved from the word I gave to keep the father in prison, and even to lose all traces of him *. But at that period, my friends, or rather that race of cold-blooded frogs which at Paris are termed friends, were either tired or alarmed. I was myself offuscated by that black smoke which mounts to the brain and enervates the heart. I, therefore, took my measures alone. Having formed my plan, I told Caroline † to request Dupont ‡ the next time he went to Paris to see the man of the police §, and also to undertake the whole matter herself. She thrust herself into the business forthwith. Dupont has intellect and talent, but he is all of a piece: his mind is romantic, and he is always occupied about himself and about the part he is playing in any matter, which stamps him with inferiority. He is, therefore, no match for Caroline, and she governs him as she pleases. As soon as I knew the plans of the fellow ||, the letters

* The Marquis afterwards repeated this assertion in another letter written to his brother on the 10th of March 1782. In it he says: —“ If my poor grandson had lived, his father would have been still in prison.”

† Madame du Saultant.

§ Boucher.

‡ Dupont de Nemours.

|| Mirabeau.

began. I know not how this man has managed to gain over his superiors, but they are all wholly devoted to him. You know their mad and whimsical compliance with his wishes, and this rendered the working of the vessel so much easier. Dupont laboured on, and assured us that he could bring back that sinning mind, which would bend only to his father and uncle. That man's star had killed his child * at nurse, and the mother brought all her romance into play, to reconcile us and his wife † to him. He was, therefore, told how to act ; he nicked the joint with his usual ardour ; his letters remained without reply, but they became more pressing, more submissive, and more natural. I had long been of opinion that the world would soon be at an end if madmen did not engender ; that, whilst I was alive, things would hold together, but the moment my eyes were closed this man would be let loose. The age for persons of his sort to live in is arriving with rapid strides ; there is no woman now-a-days who does not bear in her womb a Van Arteveld, or a Masaniello.

* Sophie-Gabrielle.

† We have a proof of this fact in the following passage :—" I have received a letter from Madame de Monnier who speaks of you, and invokes your testimony regarding the efforts she is making to induce the Count to follow my advice. She is really an interesting lady. I have often thought that romantic women are much better than men, even when the latter are romantic like themselves."—*Unpublished letter from Dupont de Nemours to Boucher, dated July 14th 1779.*

In three months, therefore, you would see him obtain letters of abolition, make his creditors' finger-joints crack, and figure away at Versailles. I made up my mind therefore, and had it suggested to him to write to his sister,—for all such fellows have nothing but what others inspire them with. This one, with a great deal of what is termed intellect, is positively nothing but what others make him. Violent passions lead either to great crimes or to heroic virtues; there is no middle course for such people. All his heroism, at present, can consist only in conquering himself and remaining supple. All this will tell you that he wrote only at the moment I thought proper that he should write; and that I did not think proper he should do so until I resolved to save him, if circumstances yielded to such a consummation, and I could conscientiously promote it. I think then that, for his own purpose as well as ours, he must be liberated after trial. His purpose is to recover his social condition and be reconciled to his wife; ours is to have a family from their reconciliation. Such is the real state of the case. Moreover, I have told myself every day that it is unjust I should keep any secrets from you, who are the angel of judgment, whilst I am his trumpeter;—from you who are one of those men of whom the Doctor *

* Quesnay.

said that one and one make a hundred and eleven ;—from you who, when I announced ‘ The Friend of Men,’ pointed him out ;—from you, who enter body and soul into all that relates to race and lineage. There is no finessing with your powerful and mature judgment ; therefore, I have always taken care duly to communicate to you all and several the measures, documents, and incidents connected with this business *.”

Although the Marquis had fully made up his mind, he wished to graduate the trial which Mirabeau was to undergo ; and not yield, like others, to the sway of affection—for he felt none towards his son.

“ In truth, I foresaw that, unless I took especial care, this man would come out after I was gone ; I foresaw that the fellow, who, in 1771, when speaking for the first time to M. de Maurepas, who was as mad as he, seized that minister by a button of his doublet, and who now rules his own immediate superiors, would not be held long. I therefore considered myself in the light of an old gaoler ; and, as I was in duty bound, when they came to me, I directed the whole affair towards his wife, because, in fact, they will have to settle the matter between them. Nevertheless, I perceive, in all the gentleman’s letters, that, as transitions

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 6th 1780.

cost him nothing, he is butting directly against me ; and, as he always wants the impossible thing, I may tell you in confidence, that he has precisely found it in this instance. But, therefore, I feel my strength ; all weakness on my part is the generosity of the lion. I will show him that to forgive and to forget are not the same thing ; and some day, when you can say to me ‘ upon my honour and conscience, I affirm to you that your son has the head of a wise man and the soul of a hero,’ then I will see him. Until that period he shall not look upon his father’s face. I do not think I am saying too much ; and, besides, it is proper that this should be an object of emulation to him, which he will not lose the hope of attaining *.”

“ This gentleman is spanking along at his own pace, thinking to drag us along with him. Not but all these women would send me forward at the same speed, if I let them have their way. When they praised his letter to his wife, I said only : ‘ Take him his soup, that he may eat it ;’ an allusion to an anecdote of our grotesque cousin the Marquis of Chamarau. He had sent to the bishop for permission to eat meat. No sooner was his messenger gone than the devout epicure began to calculate the time. ‘ Ah ! there he is—now he

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 8th 1786.

is arrived—he asks—he has obtained. Ha ! who waits there ?—bring me my meat soup that I may eat it.*”

The essential condition of Mirabeau's release, that is to say, the consent of the Marquis of Marignane and his daughter, or, more strictly speaking, a demand made by them, was not easy of fulfilment. The Countess of Mirabeau shows this in the following letter :—

“ I see your goodness of heart in the application you have made in favour of M. de Mirabeau. I will talk to you about this with the strictest candour. I have so strong an attachment to the family into which I have entered that I feel the most lively grief at seeing the eldest born of that family in the unhappy situation to which he is reduced. I would give my life's blood to see him prudent and happy ; but my kind sister, what can I do to effect this ? You would not surely advise me to give the public a subject of ridicule, by going to your brother, without even knowing what are his present feelings towards me. I must first show to my father your letter, and another from M. de Mirabeau written in the most amicable strain. I will not permit myself to examine whether I ought to believe in the latter : I feel that it is my duty to intercede for him, and I will try to fulfil it. But I confess to you that it

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 8th 1780.

is a terrible task for me to talk to my father about M. de Mirabeau's letters, because we never agree as to what I am to say or do. He flies into a passion, and after I have written several letters without satisfying him, he is sure to disapprove of the one I send at last*."

Mirabeau's letters expressed greater hope and confidence than he had reason to feel, or probably did feel. After a rigorous imprisonment of three years and a quarter, he had not yet reached the point to which all his efforts and solicitations tended; nevertheless, far from yielding to discouragement, he daily renewed his exertions. In transcribing a few pages more of his letters, our only object is to give the fullest possible development to Mirabeau's character, and show how much sensibility he still possessed, though his heart had been seared by injustice and persecution. His kindly nature was worthy of his great genius; and, taking into consideration the good qualities that outweighed his natural defects and overcame his evil destiny, let us deplore without bitterness, and judge without excess

* Unpublished letter from the Countess of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant dated September 14th 1780. We at first thought of inserting Mirabeau's letter to which his wife alludes, it being a remarkable production as a mixture of art and sensibility; but upon reflection we have omitted it, because it would only further incumber our narrative. Besides, the well-known circumstances of the subsequent divorce leave no subject of interest or curiosity in the letters which passed between the husband and wife.

of severity, the errors into which he was led, still more by the fault of others than by his own passions.

The following is another letter from Mirabeau to his sister :—

“ I forgot, dear and kind sister, to send you a copy of my letter to Madame de Mirabeau ; and I now repair the omission. This is a habit I wish to assume ; I mean that of sending you copies of my letters. You will make a proper use of them. If ever I write a foolish thing, my good sister, on seeing the blunder, will endeavour to repair it ; if I do well, she will make the most of it. Enclosed are the letters I have written to my wife and uncle. To the latter I have sent a copy of your charming communication. I had delayed doing this because I have been, and am still, afflicted with putrid fever. I have cut short the complaint with phosphorus. You perceive that your poor brother still requires incendiary remedies, but only physically. I have ventured also to write to my father. I do not inclose a copy of that letter, as I trust you will see the original.

“ I am really beginning to flatter myself that some of my troubles are nearly at an end ; for all sorts of pleasures are coming to me in succession. They were preceded by a great mark of indulgence from my father, owing to my repentance. He gave me intimation of this through my uncle. Of all these

pleasures, that renew my existence, my father's half-mute kindness is the one I feel the most. Then again, my uncle has lectured me with great severity, through which his extreme kindness of heart always peered forth. Under great harshness of expression, he conceals the extreme of sensibility and goodness. I wrote to my father-in-law: he might have left me without a reply, but I have had the happiness of receiving reproaches from him: I say happiness, because war between honest people must always end in peace.

"I throw myself into your arms and into those of your sister-in-law, and I hope for every thing from your zeal and her activity. She is naturally not very active, but you will make her so. You two, when united, can make the whole world do as you please. What renders virtue so powerful is that she is at the same time good and beautiful.*"

The Countess and her father did not continue to reply to Mirabeau's letters; the Bailli did not venture to intercede with them, nor indeed could he well have done so.

"Although there is an appearance of intimacy between that house and me, there is so little warmth in

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 1st 1780.

them that we place very little confidence in each other*. When I am at Mirabeau, they would let the sky fall upon their heads before they would write to me. A person who does not reside in the same town that they do, is as far from them as if he were in America. When I meet them at present, I never mention the matter at all; for having begun by showing them all the letters I received, and finding that they did not act in the same manner towards me, I stopped short. It is not from want of confidence on their parts, but from indolence, and perhaps from aversion in the father. The daughter is very much embarrassed to play her part: she wishes her husband to recover his freedom, but knows not how to do, nor dares to do, nor does anything †."

Mirabeau, uneasy at his wife's silence, again wrote to her, enclosing his letter in the following to Madame du Saillant.

"I send you, dear sister, a letter I have just written to Madame de Mirabeau. Her silence grieves me. During the moments when my eyes are opening to the twilight of hope, the merest trifle might throw me back into utter darkness. Has her intercession with my father

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated August 16th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated August 20th 1780.

proved only the impulse of an ephemeral and sterile compassion?—I candidly confess to you my fears. I still flatter myself that she will be moved by my perseverance; for when a kind heart is once touched, it soon expands. It is gratifying to me again to express my sense of your generous and indulgent friendship. Receive once more the most tender assurances of it*."

It has already been stated that the project of liberation was made to depend upon the consent of the Marquis of Marignane and his daughter. The Marquis of Mirabeau himself had written to them upon the subject †; but the lady's father had strong prejudices against his son-in-law—prejudices instilled into his mind by interested collaterals, whilst excessive timidity withheld the Countess of Mirabeau from showing any opposition to her father's feelings. Had she really been attached to her husband, she would have overcome this timidity; but such affection was not in Emily's nature. During a period of seven years she had not only enjoyed but revelled in the freedom of a species of widowhood, embellished by splendid fêtes, each day renewed, of which she was the principal ornament; and she dreaded perhaps the approaching prospect of a

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 6th 1780.

† Case and counsel's opinion for the Countess of Mirabeau, Aix, 1783. Mouret, page 38.

retired life, without opulence and its attendant pleasures, after the liberation and return of her husband.

These delays threw a gloom of despondency over Mirabeau's mind.

"My dear sister," he wrote, "I greatly needed your letter of September 6th; it has alleviated the deep and poignant affliction produced by very unfavourable news I have received in this horrible dungeon, where I am condemned to every kind of impotency. My uncle has never written to me so harshly, and in a manner so well calculated to deprive me of all hope, and even of all my courage, (if the latter could be annihilated,) as since my conscience has told me that I deserve something better.

"As I was just reading over and over again the underlined passage in your letter, a reflection struck me, sad and affecting, and which infinitely increased my emotion. With the sole exception of yourself, I have not had a kind, encouraging or consolatory word from any body but my father. Good God! am I no longer known? Is it thus, that they are forcing me to fling myself into the flames? My father—they may say what they please, but my father is the only person who has just grounds for uttering dreadful reproaches; yet, he is the only person who utters none, or at least utters them with that paternal and noble moderation, which places the balm by the side of the wound. Alas!

I am very unfortunate and very guilty at having misunderstood him:—but is an unhappy and repentant man to be crushed and abandoned? Let what will be the thought of my heart, it is better than that.

“I thought I understood my uncle’s language—I thought I knew it well;—but I know it no longer. A candid and noble expression, he terms ‘pride;’ one submissive and modest, he calls ‘falseness,’ and ‘honeyed verbiage.’ He even reproaches me with my ‘cleverness,’ as if my father’s son could write like a fool; as if it were not a desirable thing that a person whom it is wished to reform, should be ‘very clever’; and as if a man had no other good quality than ‘the extent of his intellect.’ Gracious heaven!—so teasing and cruel is this, that I never felt so much like a fool as I do now. I do not love to meditate when my heart ought and is willing to speak; and I, who usually let my pen run on, could sooner have solved a problem in transcendental mathematics, than have replied to my uncle. I enclose one of his letters; it is perhaps the most discouraging he has written to me, and I have not gained an inch of ground with him. Upon reflection, I shall not yet send you his letter, because I know not what answer to make to it. If I listened to the suggestions of my heart, I should plumply tell him what I think. I should say——

“‘Either my faults are deserving of civil death, or they have required only a long and painful correction.

I know the extent of the wrongs I have committed, and I bless, with tears in my eyes, the hand that has chastised me. But many actions similar to those I have committed, and even more heinous, have not, legally speaking, led to the terrible sentence of civil death. I have undergone the penalty which my conduct deserved, by enduring a long captivity, that has brought me to a sense of my errors. If, at an early period of my life, the fire of youth, burning thoughts, bad advice, and particularly unfortunate circumstances, gained the victory over the true nature of my heart, and made me belie protestations which were really sincere,—to consider me at present as about to pursue the same line of conduct, is reversing, for me alone, the order of nature : for a man at thirty years of age is not the same that he was at twenty, especially when he is born with an imagination so sulphurous, senses so inflammable, and a mind so active and reasoning, as those of your nephew. I admit that all I have suffered, and still suffer, is a well merited chastisement ; and it is by this confession that I judge of the change that has taken place within me, and of the reliance that may be placed upon my good resolutions. If I were really not a new man, the loss of liberty, far from softening my disposition would have irritated it to such a degree that I should consider myself entitled to demand as a right that which I now supplicate as a favour ; but years, which bring reason, have shown me my fetters as so

many rays, which, by enabling me to see my past delirium, guide me towards the light I am to follow in future. When I exclaim that I am burning to atone for my faults,—shall I be condemned never to carry my wish into execution?—or shall I be accused of bad faith? What right has any one so to accuse me?—what rash prophet can read in my heart that a desire so just, so natural, and probable as the one I express, is false?’ ”

“ Speak candidly, my kind sister ; do you approve of my language ?—no doubt you do ; but if I wrote so, it would be imputed to my ‘ infernal pride.’ In my candour, the true imprint of the truths I utter, and the excellent resolutions I form, nothing would be seen but my ‘ reprobate sense.’ Yet, I tell you candidly, all the rest is mere rhetorical flummery. I do not allude to the expression of my repentance, especially to my father ; and I am a very great bungler if I cannot impart an expression of truth to what is really true. But I am speaking of the sentences I must write, and vary *ad infinitum* in order to say always the same thing. I have no doubt that were I to read over again my letters from Provence, I should find them infinitely ridiculous. If they have been shown to my father, he, who has the eye of an eagle, is very likely to have perceived this.

“ But why do people cry out that they are not serving me, whilst they are serving me ? — why try to destroy here my poor intellect, my poor sight, and

my greatly diminished strength? They are killing me; they are pushing me back into the gulf, the banks of which I am climbing up to save myself from drowning: for your reflection is perfectly just, and to day is not the first time that it has occurred to me. The cruel measures to which my mother is driven will completely overturn my new-born hopes. Her published statements will succeed in ulcerating the mind of my father-in-law, and in cooling the zeal of Madame de Mirabeau, a kind and noble-hearted woman, but who is never more than lukewarm, even in her affections. I am threatened with worse. Monsters who infest the streets of Paris, whilst many an honest man pines away at Bicêtre and the galleys, loudly boast that they will publish my letters to the hapless victim of my love*. This is dreadful; and if I survived it, I should have no other object than revenge, which I would obtain if it cost me my life! Dear sister, I am broken-hearted, and I ought not to write to you at this moment; but I must pour my grief into your bosom, and you will not show my letter if there is any danger in doing so. Is it not horrible to see a single blow destroy my hope of recovering my freedom, returning to my father's house

* This is an allusion to a threat held out by Brianson, that he would publish the letters, deposited in his hands, which Mirabeau had written to Sophie before their elopement.

and bosom, helping him to drive away domestic sorrow, and finally raising up a little the woman I have pulled down, and whom this *éclat* will destroy? I should feel less miserable if I had preserved the right of interesting my father's generosity in saving her who never was my accomplice, but was ever my victim. If the threat of publishing my letters is carried into execution, what I have stated must happen; and this is the return made to me for having three times exposed my life for that wretch *, who left me, when ill of fever, single-handed against twelve boatmen of the Rhone, whom the coward had insulted, and then ran away from. On this occasion, I was fortunate enough to get out of the scrape without shedding a single drop of blood, whilst the vile coward, who has planned several assassinations in the course of his life, fired two pistols at a man whom Providence, in its mercy, allowed him to miss. — Such is my reward, I repeat, for having given myself, from pure generosity to him and another, an appearance of having committed grievous wrongs. They will no doubt ruin themselves—but will this cure, or console me?

“I cannot think, without the most gloomy and bitter anguish, that if I were free, this publication could not take place. For, besides the consequences which these dastardly and insolent wretches would

* Brianson.

incur, if any body could temper the mind of my poor mother I am that person. I say *if*, because I have my doubts, and could answer for nothing but the zeal, activity, and perseverance which I should employ, and the evidence I could adduce to her that the counsels she has followed have ruined her, and that through me alone she can expect to come to any arrangement. Would to God I could effect one at the sacrifice of my life!—with what joy would I lay my head on the block!

“Thus then, my dear sister, as my having lived is a reason for living—which is a consolation to me, because this calculation promises that I shall long preserve my father—in like manner my having perished is a reason for perishing. If my affairs had turned to good with a little rapidity, I might have hoped to make head against the enemies of my house. But nothing is decided, and they will succeed in destroying me, in spite of my father himself. This they well know, although my mother, notwithstanding my repeated entreaties, has the mania of bringing forward my name, using it upon all occasions, and thinking she can save me, whilst I would kick away that fatal plank, if it were laid down for me to cross upon.

“But what better contradiction can I give to all that comes from that quarter, than the letters I write to Madame de Mirabeau? Why does she not take a step so public, that I must be proved the most ungrateful of men if I ever hereafter give her reason to complain?

She has so many advantages over me, that I venture to say her family are much to blame if they let her lose them. I do not allude to the *inheriting* part of her family. Her father will not come round of his own accord :—I speak without ambiguity. The Marquis of Marignane is a man of noble feelings, very honourable, and very generous; but his mind is extremely weak, much more so than you have any notion of; and the means which are brought to bear upon his mind against me, will always be successful so long as his daughter, who might make him do as she pleased, does not oppose a vigorous reaction to these means. She must therefore be brought to act. But is she sincere? I cannot say. Still she ought to know me sufficiently to be sure of me, if she becomes the agent of my liberation. These are not mere words,—it is an exposure of my naked heart. If this language displeases, it must at all events, inspire confidence.

“I have thus given a summary of my reflections or rather of my feelings. Make what use of it you think proper, and support me, for I much require it I give myself up to your care, and advice; but I feel in my heart that if I do not soon leave this place, I shall never leave it alive. I am corroded by a black bile very foreign to my natural constitution. It is as well to observe that if I quit this tenure blind, as it is probable I shall—although what I say on that subject is termed nonsense in Provence—I must be taken

to Paris by way of Charenton or the Pont Royal, in order that I may be cast forthwith into the river; for I should otherwise prove a burthen to myself and others, and I have done too much harm to end thus without despair. Imagine, my dear sister, that with all the resources which this locality as well as the kindness of the King's commissioner can afford, for me to take exercise, I work ten or twelve hours a day when I am very good, that is to say, when I take the most recreation I possibly can. Being deprived of all society, even the most rustic, I am obliged to walk about with no other companionship than my own beautiful thoughts, which are not always the most agreeable in the world, as you may well suppose, and which, when they are only literary, send me back to my books or my papers. But this is nothing: the summer which enabled me to perspire and walk in a garden thirty or thirty-five paces long, but nevertheless in a garden, is bearable; but in winter, when the garden is covered with snow, pity alone, not to speak of necessity, would prevent me from keeping a poor sentinel in the garden exposed to the frozen blast, and I must remain encaged in a cell ten feet square. What could I do in such a miserable dwelling to pass away the time, if I did not study *?"

The reply to this desponding letter is so remarkable

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 10th 1780.

that we cannot refrain from transcribing a considerable portion of it, though, for the sake of brevity, we seldom insert Madame du Saillant's letters.

“ I perceive that, being tired of resistance, you throw yourself, agitated and overcome, upon the bosom of affection. You have well earned, and may therefore depend upon this affection. But it cannot perform miracles, and must therefore aim only at affording you solid and lasting consolation. Thus, never impute, I beseech you, to want of regard, or to a wish to take advantage of your situation, any of the things I shall be obliged to tell you. The language of reason is quite different from that of passion : the latter leads to either good or evil ; there is no medium—it must be to one or the other. Having escaped one of these extremes, you want to reach the other. I trust you will succeed, and I will be your security. But the true heroism intended for you is, that you should be moderate and patient ; and why should you not ? You are able to do everything, dear brother.

“ Be not surprised at the resistance you experience on the part of our kind and worthy uncle. If you find great difficulty in persuading him of your repentance, he found no less difficulty in persuading himself of your errors. I even remember that he said to a minister who informed him that you had joined in intrigues against your father,—‘ I do not believe it.

I will answer for my nephew's honour, although I know him to be wild and thoughtless!

“ My father has forgiven you ; but my uncle, who knows better than any body what my father deserves, is not bound by this act. Esteem his scolding you rather as a favour ; for people do not scold those whom they have given up. Do not attempt to justify yourself on any point, because it recalls to mind particular grievances which become exaggerated by this species of contradiction. Here that pride is detected which is imputed to you. Excuse me if I speak thus openly ; but you request me to tell you all that I observe, and I should be wanting to your affection and to the confidence you place in me were I to speak otherwise. Do not, I conjure you, give way to the agitation of your feelings with regard to the vexatious intelligence you have received, but let the wicked do that which you cannot prevent. Avoid, especially, committing yourself with them henceforward in any way whatever. Let them act and pursue their own course ; the only real evil will be to themselves.

* * * * *

“ It would, no doubt, be atrocious, were the aberrations to which you have yielded too much, to be revived by such a publication ; but raise your mind above the humiliation of undergoing this species of *amende honorable*. However improper these letters

may be, they will not show you more guilty than you have already appeared. You know and feel this for your humiliation; your writings and your conduct have made the world pass the same judgment upon you. But you must still feel and be sensible of it, in order to keep up your courage; and the calmness of the present man must be superior to the humiliations deserved by the past man. A proper sense of all this, and your future conduct, can alone wipe away so many foul stains. Persist in what you now acknowledge to be the only feelings calculated to atone for the wrongs you have committed; this alone may some day induce people to advocate your cause. By bestowing your confidence upon villains, you prepare tortures for yourself, whilst there is no danger in even offending honest men. A conviction of this, dear brother, will prevent you from opening your heart to perfidious counsellors. Would to God our unhappy mother would close her ears against their words! I cannot but deeply lament the difficulties now forming on her side, against the accomplishment of our wishes regarding yourself.

* * * * *

“As none could have involved you without your own concurrence, so also none can save you without it. They who are holding out a helping hand to you, will never withdraw it unless resisted by yourself. Take patience, give up actions, and speak only through your

feelings. Listen to the counsels of prudence. Persuade yourself of the immense difficulties to be overcome, and be well assured that we are stirring in your behalf. Consider that it is not in contemplation merely to alter your present situation, like the denouement of a play, in which, when the curtain falls, no one inquires further about the characters represented. The object in view is to restore you to society upon the best possible terms for the present and the future. If you were only to be restored to the open air, like those wretches who receive a little temporary chastisement, are then left to themselves to embrace good or evil, and are forgotten or sent on to their ruin, your business would be more easily disposed of. But I suspect you expect a different kind of treatment, one more worthy of your name, of the sentiments you have imbibed, and of the advantages belonging to your destiny. Enjoy then the hope to which your good feelings may lead, and take patience as you think of the depth of the gulf from which you wish to be withdrawn*.”

On a sudden Mirabeau's discouragement ceased, and he gave way to hopes which were not better founded.

“ I have received from Provence a packet too important and too urgent to allow me time for a proper

* Unpublished letter from Madame du Saillant to Mirabeau, dated September 15th, 1780.

reply to your excellent letter. I shall write to you on Thursday, and answer only its chief points Alas ! when, besides your rights as my benefactress and my sister, you are the organ through which, whatever information my father lets fall for my use, is conveyed to me, can you doubt that you are the object of my habitual thoughts ?

“ But as the name of Provence has surely roused your attention, know that I have received from Raspaud * a letter of thirteen pages, giving me a most sensible and affecting account of his journey to Marignane. I will send you this letter on Thursday ; meantime, I must answer it, and my reply will be good, because the letter has given me a great deal of emotion. The kind-hearted Raspaud flew to Mirabeau to concert measures with the excellent Bailli, who, as you are aware, since he repeats it so often, neither does nor will interfere in any way, though he does every possible and impossible thing, and on the margin of his nullity you must write *black*, meaning to say, *white*. He himself instructed Raspaud as to what he was to do, and Raspaud has followed his instructions. Everything, therefore, promises the most complete success †.”

* The Marquis of Marignane's Notary, at Aix.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 18th 1780.

Notwithstanding these hopes, Mirabeau's cause was far from being gained with his wife and his father-in-law. Of this we are informed by the Bailli.

“ The Countess has written to me to say that she dares not broach the subject to her father, who is greatly exasperated, and will not be easily brought round, because he has people about him who are interested in preventing a reconciliation. What I can assure you of is, that Marignane is fond of quiet, and the noisy habits of his son-in-law have alarmed him, even if this be the Count's only offence. It will be difficult, therefore, to persuade him, and his daughter will do nothing without his concurrence, if she would not expose herself to every annoyance *.”

We add another letter from Madame du Saillant, and it is the last we shall notice. It is entitled to a place here, because in it she gives her brother an opportunity of refuting one of the most grievous imputations that ever attached to his name.

“ Were I acted upon only by a sense of your present situation, I should be constantly writing to you, because it would, in some degree, be sharing your solitude. Nevertheless, I must not do so, because it is impossible I can always speak in furtherance of your impatience, and I should not like to make you more uncomfortable

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 26th 1780.

than you are. I was well satisfied with your letter, and it was only in reading it aloud, afterwards, that I perceived I ought not to have shown it to my father. I had advised you to attempt to justify nothing, but I did not notice that you were concealing a great deal. He interrupted me saying, ‘What call you a moment of madness?—a moment that has lasted these ten years!—I have the dates and periods;’ and in a moment he drew an energetic picture of that lapse of time, mentioning even statements written against himself. All this he specified with the power of language you know he possesses. Finally, he added;—‘To forgive is one thing; I have done so, and before God I would save him, if possible, at my own personal cost: this I not only think, but feel. To forget is another thing: it exceeds our power and our duty*.’

* Madame du Saillant’s statement here is by no means exaggerated, for the Marquis expresses himself as follows in a letter written two or three days subsequently :—

“The other day, in a letter, he was adducing as a justification of a certain summary, a fit of rage caused by the most atrocious and perfidious suggestions. I took up the word, for the fit has lasted ten years, beginning from the period of his departure. I made a *prosopeia*, saying, that to pardon was my delight and my duty; that to aid and serve even those who would kill me was in my character; but that to forget, was neither in our power nor part of our duty. His sister has since earnestly advised him to refrain in future from similar recapitulations, and to take condemnation and silence for the past.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 30th 1780.*

“ I was told to go on ; and upon his stopping me for a definition of good conduct, and asking me if it was any other thing than getting up in the morning with an intention of doing no evil, and going to bed at night without having done evil, I took the liberty to reply :

“ ‘ It is, I think, feeling that one has squandered the time, the reputation, and the fortune of oneself and of others, and doing quite the reverse.’

“ He squeezed my hand, listened to the remainder of your letter, then quietly said : —

“ ‘ This is the first—entirely the first time, that I have perceived any talent in him. It is a proof that his pride is much broken down : for presumption prevents us from interrogating our own ideas, and calls up nothing but the recollection of them.’

“ These expressions of his must have struck me, as I give them to you so minutely, and, as it turned out, I was delighted and consoled at not being mistaken, in point of fact, as to the effect the letter would produce. However, do not let us again expose ourselves to similar recapitulations. You know our excellent father’s mildness and generosity at bottom ; but we cannot say that he is flexible, especially when he considers himself right.

“ As for our uncle, he loves us all, I believe ; but he is devoted, body and soul, to his brother, and to him alone. I think him a little moved in your favour, as he lectures you, for he previously intrenched himself behind the pretence that an uncle was nothing, and he

called you *Monsieur le Comte*, in honour to the eldest born of his house, but who was an absolute stranger to him. You must therefore win him through my father, for it is useless to play for love stakes at such a distance *."

The following is Mirabeau's reply.

"A single word in your letter makes me take up the pen. All the remainder had deprived me of strength to write, so powerfully was I affected. It bore upon my mind too strongly to leave me the freedom of guiding my pen, and too much upon my nerves, which have so long been in a state of excitement, to allow even the possibility of writing. It is true, that your letter, so deeply affecting and evincing a rectitude of reasoning not less rare, inclosed one of eight pages from Dupont, containing information which I cannot cease from reading over and over again. What a man is this father whom I had so long misunderstood !

"You are quite right : I ought to seek excuses for nothing. But there is a circumstance which it is my duty to disavow with all the horror it inspires ; and I would never bear the light, nor the looks of men, if I thought that a single honest heart could suppose me capable of such a thing. And yet some persons have had the base cruelty to say that it occurred ; villains

* Unpublished letter from Madame du Saillant to Mirabeau, dated September 23rd 1780.

have invented and taxed me with it. Do you think that I could ever have threatened my father's life? Great God!—if you thought so, how can you all be mad enough to attempt obtaining my freedom? It is an offence to justice and to nature. You do not, you cannot believe this atrocity; and if my father can have believed it, he must be the best, but the most unfortunate of men.

* * * *

“ Let us bury in eternal oblivion so many misfortunes, as well as the wrongs which my father has forgiven. My heart is, and will be, but too much lacerated by them. But tell my father—and say it to him in an affecting, but firm tone—that I devote myself to his hatred, to his exheredation, to his curse, and to everlasting torture, if mortal man can cite a sentence, a line, nay, a single word of mine, to justify the abominable calumny which I have this day heard of for the first time*.

* The same day, Mirabeau wrote to Boucher, as follows:—

“ The packet of this day has singularly affected me. Certainly, you had only to question me—you whose knowledge, and goodness, and prudence, I esteem and revere. It is my duty to explain the matter, and I do so. I have learned this day that atrocious calumny: it freezes my blood with horror. How could I have let you know this? Neither in the pamphlet you know of, nor in any periodical whatever, did I ever write a single word concerning my father; and I would stab myself this very instant if the thought of becoming a parricide ever entered my head; I would stab myself, I say, to get rid of so horrible a recollection.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated September 27th 1780.*

You may add, that, in stating what induced me to write this detestable libel*, I never intended to justify, nor even to excuse myself; that I know and feel how little verisimilitude there was in what I said. How well ought I to have remembered that nothing was so far from my father's character as speaking ill of his own family†. But I was like a drunken man. I say this, because it is true, and I deeply lament it.

"I cannot reply to your letter, except in a summary, because, very really, I am not myself. Dupont's letter of the 24th, and yours of the 23rd, press upon, enclose, and burn my heart‡."

We continue to extract from Mirabeau's letters.

"Place at my father's feet my respectful thanks for the word he has sent me through you. He exceeds my hopes, when he thinks of saving me. He grants me much more than I can ever hope to deserve from him, when he permits me to be guided, and gives counsel to my counsellors.

"You make me uneasy about your health; take care of this most valuable of all gifts after virtue and freedom. At a time when my mind was but little

* This is an allusion to the statement partly written by Mirabeau when in Holland, and signed by the advocate, Groubert de Groubental.

† In allusion to a saying falsely attributed to the Marquis, concerning Mirabeau and his mother.

‡ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 27th 1780.

enlightened, I madly trifled with mine. The first years of my life, like prodigal ancestors, have disinherited my last : and if I do not include this among my causes of remorse, I place it in the first rank of my causes for repentance. To do every thing, and more especially to do good, health is the first instrument ; for it is very difficult to preserve a healthy soul in a cacochymic body.

“ With my boiling feelings, and my not less burning style, it is impossible to write natural letters to a person I love, but whom I fear and respect, and who seems dissatisfied with every thing. I trust that you perceive by my letters to you, which are evidently written in the overflowing of my heart, that I love these out-pourings, and that my pen does not run as glibly even as I could wish. Whenever I appear to you less natural, you may depend upon it that I am not at my ease. My disposition has been too much compressed, and is always in extremes ; but it is not yet mature enough ; and this is the key to most of my blunders and actual defects. In my letter to Dupont, I have explained this sentence fully ; it is the result of profound meditation upon myself. If you do not understand me, apply to him ; for I am not to-day in a much better condition to write than you are to read my letters. I have still the fever, which has never left me since my last.

“ I am completely resigned. This is easy now that I have read in my father’s heart, for his intentions

soften the saddest reality. My body is not so supple : let it take its chance. I do not conceal from you, however, that it seems hard to me that any one who is not my father*, who has in no respect the same rights, and towards whom I am a million of times less guilty, should impose so severe a law upon me, whilst my Supreme Judge shows me nothing but lenity. Dupont, from humanity, committed an error : this was making me see my situation in too favourable a light. This gives him a further claim to my gratitude ; for he did it because I was in pain ; and, after all, these false flashes of hope have not done me so much harm, for I know my star well enough to depend upon nothing. Hold ! I must at all events accept your affection, upon which I firmly rely, and which I return with all gratitude and devotedness†.”

Notwithstanding Mirabeau's assertion, he was not “completely resigned.” A few days previously, in a fit of discouragement and bitterness, he had written in terms that alarmed the prudent Boucher.

“Your letters,” wrote the latter to Mirabeau, “shall certainly not be sent. You wrote them without due reflection ; and I must tell you candidly, that you should

* The Marquis of Marignane.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated October 3rd 1780.

never reply, until the next day, to any communications you receive*."

Some hours after, Boucher again wrote to Mirabeau.

"Ah! my friend," said he, "what have you done?—and what should I have done, if my prudence had deserted me? You are to have an almost entire freedom, Pompignan for your place of trial, plenty of air, and an extensive library. But not a word yet: you must appear to know nothing about it†."

This project, which was not carried into execution, as we shall presently show, was also mentioned in a letter from the Marquis.

"I had an idea of sending him to Pompignan, an excellent place of retirement, with good air, a beautiful country, and an excellent library. The person who was to have been his host‡ is a man of honour, talent,

* Unpublished letter from Boucher to Mirabeau, dated September 26th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated September 28th 1780. In the letters from Vincennes, vol. iv., pages 42, 278, 279, 282, and 289, the project is mentioned of sending Mirabeau to reside some time at the castle of Pompignan.

‡ Lefranc, of Pompignan, author of "Dido," and "Sacred Poems," possessed an estate in the South. Thither it was intended to send Mirabeau. The following is what the latter says of the place:—

"Pompignan is in Languedoc, and situated near Montauban. This splendid property belongs to the author of "Dido," a man of high talent, (although so much attacked and jeered at by Voltaire,)

mind, and science. But the poor fellow has had an attack of apoplexy; and although he retains his perfect senses, and has written to me that he is in want of somebody to talk to, I know not what may occur from one moment to another to this old and worthy friend. Thus our ramparts crumble to dust, and our witnesses disappear *."

and a friend of my father's of forty years' standing. He has the most complete private library in Europe, without excepting those of M. de Paulmy and M. de La Vallière.—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated September 27th 1780.*

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 30th 1780. In one written two days after, we find this remarkable passage :—

"Lefranc, the second of my friends in seniority, and assuredly one of my best, informs me that he has just had a fresh attack of apoplexy, which affects his speech. He says in allusion to it: 'For my own part, this accident scarcely gives me any uneasiness; I foresee the result, and am preparing for the worst.' What a difference between the last struggle of this man, and the end of that devil's imp (Voltaire) who persecuted him, and who came hither to die a theatrical death, howling against God and his Saints, and giving us a rehearsal of the pretended scene, 'Thou hast conquered, Galilean!' All this difference proceeds from the one having spent his life in doing good, the other in getting himself praised."

It is, perhaps, needless for us to state that the above passage contains an allusion to Julian the Apostate.

Lefranc, of Perpignan, however, survived this attack four years. He died November 1st 1784, aged 75 years; and this event, at which the Marquis was much affected, suggested to him the following reflections, with which we conclude this note :—

"I received the news from the son of the deceased, and his worthy brother the Archbishop of Vienne, who was with him when he died.

Mirabeau received with transport this intimation of an approaching change for the better ; and his thoughts were immediately directed to Sophie.

“ I hope,” he wrote, “ that with this good news your sensible and generous heart will not forget the gentle and tender Sophie, who, always a victim and rejoicing at her own sacrifices, has a right, as sacred to your friendship as to my love, to be the first informed of any

It was I who communicated the intelligence to the public prints. Lefranc was a friend of forty-seven years' standing, and his mind was one of the most vast and the best stored in knowledge that existed in Europe. He was firm in principle, and was gifted with a lofty soul, a noble genius, and rare talents. Simple as a child, easy to be deceived like most great men, he was an excellent citizen, a religious man, and an example of virtue. The time is come when some justice will be done to him. That which he has effected on his own estate by economy and perseverance, in splendid establishments of every description, would surprise even a sovereign. He considered me his first friend, and I shall always be proud of the title.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame de Saillant, dated November 14th 1784.*

“ In imitation of the great baboon (Voltaire) all the apes of Parnassus have made it their duty to sputter at and try to bite him. Nevertheless, the Old Man of the Mountain, at the singular assizes he is now holding at Paris during his last days, and before he yields up his filthy soul, having heard certain mongrel curs, who were trying to pay their court to him, barking their spleen against Pompignan, said to them :—‘ We may have quarrelled, but that does not prevent him from being the first writer of the day, both in verse and in prose.’ ”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, Librarian of La Brera at Milan, dated December 12th 1784.*

thing fortunate that occurs to me. Send me, then, my excellent friend, a letter from her; and be assured, that your prudence has so great an ascendancy over me, who have honour and intellect, but not sufficient maturity yet, only because it is accompanied with mildness and sensibility*.”

A few days later, Mirabeau again wrote :—

“ I send you, my good friend, my reply to the tender Sophie. Forward it to her as soon as possible, since your friendship is resigned to all the importunities of mine. It is but just that this dear creature should be informed of the progress made in my affairs. Her health and courage, undermined by such lengthened uncertainty, must be supported. How does her gentle heart yield to every circumstance that interests the object of her love ! how strongly does the want of loving which belongs to her nature, render her submissive in all her desires, her opinions, and her thoughts.

* * * * *

“ And they say I must avoid other women ! Oh ! my friend, think you that a man can be twice beloved like this ?—that a feeling heart can exchange such happiness for the triumphs of vanity † ? ”

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated September 28th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated September 28th 1780.

We have shown, in a former part of this work, that one of the chief objects to be attained by Mirabeau's detention in the castle of Joux, was to prevent him from supporting the judicial resistance of his ill-used mother. The Marquis, from not knowing and being unwilling to know his son's real disposition, was fearful that this support would be given. We are about to show that, at present, under very different circumstances, the Marquis was willing to loosen the prisoner's fetters, but not to break them.

“ I am determined to demand only the freedom of the castle, on condition 1st, that he changes his name : 2ndly, that he sleeps every night at the donjon, the key of which can be easily taken away, if he should become too lively *.”

The Marquis yielded, perhaps, because the government was tired of ministering to his hatred towards his son. That the ministers had resolved to do nothing further, is evident from the retort made by M. de Maurepas. Perhaps, also, the Marquis wished now to make an agent of the son whom he had formerly feared as an opponent. Let us, however, without recurring to documents already published, listen to what Mirabeau says on the subject.

“ Read my letter to the end without comment, then meditate, then consult, then reply.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated October 10th 1780.

“ First, there are two axioms which, in my opinion, ought to serve as the basis of every plan of negociation with my mother.

“ 1st. Nothing will be obtained from her except by getting her to sign suddenly, and by a sort of surprise acting upon her mind and heart.

“ But, 2ndly. This storm cannot be commenced without opening the trenches in due form, and carrying forward numerous parallels until the body of the place is reached. (Excuse this jargon, for I have no time to attend to style, and it is of no consequence.) Here are two things which must appear to you contrary to each other; but I tell you that they are true and connexive. To prove this, let us argue hypothetically.

“ I suppose there are two modes of *personal* negociation with my mother—this is the first:—

“ Dupont or Boucher (rather the latter) takes me from the donjon of Vincennes, and conveys me, well boxed up and still a prisoner, to the parlour of St. Michael *. There I attempt to move her feelings, and say: ‘ You are right—Oh! truly you are right. But I am dying; and then a lawsuit may be gained or lost. If you gain it, do you not perceive that the judges who decide cannot, in like manner, get me released from the

* A conventual establishment for the confinement of females, in which the Marchioness of Mirabeau was detained by a *lettre de cachet*.

donjon of Vincennes? Now, no one will ever be able to drive it out of my father's head that I have intrigued, planned, and concerted in your behalf, and his resentment will, therefore, be eternal. I shall, consequently, be kept a prisoner till his death (should it precede mine); for you know that the ministers are on his side. If, by your interest, which is not at all probable, you should succeed in obtaining my release, behold me ruined, driven for ever from my paternal home, expelled from the Marignane family, at your charge, and devoured with grief. If you lose your lawsuit, you will die broken-hearted, and the gulf I am in will only become deeper. Now, instead of all this, my happiness and peace of mind are in your hands, &c., &c.'

"Do you know what answer I shall get? The same already given to me in Holland on a nearly similar occasion. 1st. 'I cannot lose my lawsuit.' 2ndly. 'I cannot lose my lawsuit.' 3rdly. 'I cannot lose my lawsuit,' and so forth *ad infinitum*. 'Having gained it, I run to you; you are already in Olympus;' . . . for it is thus matters are looked at. I shall, perhaps, move her; make her shed a few tears;—but let me state every thing on the bright side: suppose I shake her opinion, persuade her to do what I ask, and return to sleep in my prison. . . . Next day, a grand letter is dictated by Mazurier or by Larrieu*, and my work is

* Agents who entirely governed the Marchioness of Mirabeau.

destroyed. This is not all : it will be published that I have seen, and proposed, and that my father is making use of me ; it will be inferred that he is afraid, and other similar follies asserted ; and my father, already indisposed, will have another cause of grief.

“ I now state the second personal mode of negotiating.

“ Suppose a portion of freedom has been restored to me, on account of my ill-health, and I obtain from *the minister* (for, besides that the master of Bignon is not to appear in the business, high-sounding words are necessary) permission to remain a fortnight or three weeks at Paris to have my body examined by the surgeons, my eyes by the oculists, &c., on the express condition that I shall be seen by no one except the individuals named by my father ; that I shall go no where ; that, in a word, I shall remain in prison either at M. Boucher's, or at Dupont's, or at any other person's ; — but that I *may* go to St. Michel. It is evident that I should then act no longer like a stifled man attempting to breathe ; I should not now be a slave, nor even a client. I set out with letting her say all she pleases, but I temporise ; and I get myself supported by Larrieu, who has always considered me his dupe, and whose dupe I must still pretend to be : — but he is to be gained over. This Larrieu, moreover, has sense enough to desire to appear as playing a praiseworthy part, and the more so because he does

not stand high in the opinion of honest men. I now show very gently, but with proof in hand, that some have betrayed my mother, and others wish only to encourage the lawsuit, which for a million of reasons may be lost ; that, for as many other reasons, there may be an inclination, at Bignon, to bring the matter to an issue in order to obtain repose of mind in old age. I feel my way, always saying, 'you are right !' I bide my time, and, above all, I do not let go my hold. I quit her not during an instant, I become her very shadow ; I awe those about her, at the same time that I caress them. In fine, I lend myself to everything, and, perhaps, succeed.

“ Such, in summary, are my notions, which I might support with a great number of details. But what interest do you suppose I have in all this ? The greatest and only interest : the tranquillity of my father, and that of my poor mother. Then comes the happiness of dating from a good action. As to any expectations from my mother's fortune, I heed them not ; for I have repeatedly desired my mother to leave her fortune to any one of her children she chose, provided I was not the one, and told her that if she could make her peace at such a price, I should be the happiest of men. I even feel this better than I could say it ; and now that I have no children, if I were free to render available a donation she might at this very moment make, even to Madame de Cabris, provid

your rights were respected and my father enjoyed the usufruct necessary to his comfort, I would quickly open a vein, and sign the deed with my blood*.”

All these efforts, however, did not hasten Mirabeau's release from prison. He continued to receive harsh letters from his uncle, his wife was lukewarm in his cause, and his father-in-law was his decided enemy. A shade of bitterness at length began to appear in the prisoner's letters.

“No doubt you are very prudent, and possess all the prudence of an elder child. Be this as much as you please, but get the health of a younger. Nevertheless, I cannot yield to all you say, and I will speak to you very naturally and very clearly, for I perceive that no one of my family understands my language. This is, perhaps, an advantage; I have not changed apparently, and nothing in me was good save the bottom of my heart which was obscured by so much scoria.

“1st. I know not why you say that you write on account of *my impatience*. Dupont will tell you that I have done a little of everything here, except becoming impatient. I have written facetious things, I have written on serious and profound subjects, I have also attempted compositions of a moving character; in short, I have laboured in every branch of literature. I have a trunk

* Unpublished letter to Madame du Saillant, dated October 8th 1780.

full of papers, exclusive of my correspondence, and of the nonsense I have thrown into the fire. In good faith, can a man in prison, who has become impatient, exercise such freedom of mind as this? My father spent a few days in this place, a circumstance that constitutes the climax of his fame. Now, in my judgment, it is an enjoyment to be imprisoned for a glorious cause. But I should like for him to ask himself, whether he could have written books here? It can be done, however; for I feel that this head of mine is capable of any thing in pursuit of the grand and the beautiful. But I have passed forty months here, scourged by repentance and remorse, suffering in body, heart, and mind; and some good people, after these, my forty months of captivity, are surprised at my vivacity, at my fire, and at what they term my *gaiety* (surely this is not the proper word). Meanwhile I work like a poor devil of a purser's clerk, with a wife and six children to maintain. Now, I think all this very far from *impatience*.

“2ndly. *Raise my courage*. Dupont knows me a little too well to flatter himself that he can raise my courage. He is more fearful of my excitement than of my despondency—and he is perfectly right. It is very true, that he, like myself, and, I believe, every man who is not a slave (now, I was not born a slave, nor will I ever be one), thinks that I ought to be dependent upon my father alone. We do not, however, appreciate less

fully my father's profound wisdom in making his measures subordinate to those of the Marignane family. But I do not the less repeat, that it is hard, when the offended sovereign forgives (I mean my father), that he who, after all, is only allied to me by marriage (for I really understand my vernacular tongue), should lay down the law with the most imperious harshness. And what law?—that of Brennus, *væ victis*! I have not, nor can I make up my mind to this, because respect for misfortune, and pity for the unfortunate, are in my heart.

“3rdly. I am well aware that the situation of my whole life requires *length and patience*; but from this to a ten feet dungeon, there is a considerable distance. The following argument is difficult of refutation. My father condescends to wish to save me. Now, if I am to be saved, it must not be delayed till I am dead; but, I am dying; I am therefore justified in supplicating that I may have a larger prison, when I say that its greater dimensions will save my life. You may then take your own time, and be as long as you please in settling the matters that concern me. The Marquis of Marignane will then have no pretence for going to law, as I shall still remain a prisoner; but health will be restored to me. Under circumstances in which I have such affecting evidence of my father's intentions, I know but of one mode of reply to the above; it is to say what has been already said and repeated: ‘All he

advances about his ill-state of health is a downright story.' But I dare ask, who has a right to speak in this strain? 'He tells stories.' I must then be very impudent to write these *stories*, as I do, under the eyes of the inspecting magistrate of this prison, who knows, day by day, every thing that passes in it. And is not a word of what I write true? Then the oculists and physicians who have examined me, and continue to see me, have lied! And those who see me daily do no better! And it was for my own pleasure, that during one of the severest winters we ever had, I was sometimes obliged to take so many as three baths in one day! You must admit that such assertions are absurd. Nevertheless, Dupont said to me,—' Yes! my friend, you are very ill and suffer a great deal, but they will not believe it. Do not therefore mention it, because you must not make them suspect you of telling an untruth. But is it incredible, that a complaint to which I have always been subject, should be aggravated by forty months of captivity and want of exercise?—that my sight, which has always been delicate, should give way under the weight of fifteen hours of labour *per diem*? Well, well! if it be incredible, it is nevertheless true, and this article of *sight*, is the only point upon which I am *impatient*. I would not give a farthing to save my life, if I imagined that I could no longer be useful and even necessary to two or three individuals. In my opinion, life is the most beautiful

of nature's inventions; but to live without sight is a prospect which (I confess my weakness) draws tears from my eyes, but cruel and bitter tears, which lacerate the heart instead of alleviating its pangs. This is, I repeat, the only thing that makes me *impatient*. If you term *impatience* the warmth of my style, which is somewhat Scythian, it is for want of knowing my manner. When I write naturally, I gallop on; when I am afraid, or in grief, I slowly compose academics, which are very stupid, and very insipid, and persuade nobody. This is my present situation with my uncle.

4th. I wish to *scold no one*. Good heavens!—it truly becomes me to scold; I am too much in want of indulgence myself, not to be the most tolerant of men. But I say that my uncle inflicts great pain, infinite pain upon my heart. I no longer open his letters without shuddering, and I am ill for several days after reading one of them. It is good that man should be pounded, and Bacon is right in comparing him to aromatic herbs. But if he is too much pounded, all the perfume evaporates, and nothing remains.

“*You answer for it* is a mere form of expression. Nobody in the world, except one ‘who probes men’s loins and hearts,’ can answer for any man. And I, who write to you, am very far indeed from answering for myself, whom, however, I well know. For, 1st, I may become mad from one moment to another. Newton, who was as far above me as the heaven is above the earth, wrote

a commentary upon the Apocalypse; and I have seen a man, mild as a lamb, during a sudden vertigo, and whilst he was in perfect health, kill another man whom he did not know. 2ndly, I have, in the course of my life, done too many things, *in spite of myself*, to be able to swear that I will do such things no more,—to swear to it upon *my honour*; but I promise upon that honour that I have a firm will ever to do good in future; and I know that my will is very firm, which is the reason why I do not despise myself thoroughly,—for this quality is very rare. Further, I think that henceforth I shall never be able to do any essential evil, unless under an attack of physical madness. If, then, the security of another person is demanded of me, it is saying—*die*; for no prudent man would become moral security for another, and the security of any but a prudent man would be refused. A wise man would say, ‘I answer for it that such and such appears to me to be the case,’ but he would say no more. 5thly, It is not in me to betray my thoughts, therefore I cannot agree with you in your paragraph upon the Marquis of Marignane. I think not only that it is not his duty to force his daughter into a lawsuit with me, but that he would fail in those duties sacred to honest men, were he to do so on his belief, or pretended belief, of false reports about me. It is precisely this which worries me. The first impression produced upon me by unjust accusations, is one of suffocation; I then

reason and say to myself—‘ But they are not sincere ; they do not believe this,’ and so forth. Then I become gloomy, grieved, ill-seeing and ill-judging. . . I tell you I love not those who so easily believe the tales of wicked people. I have been the maddest of men ; but I never picked a quarrel with any one except that cowardly Villeneuve, who, as I was informed, had so basely insulted my sister. I have always been sparing of blood ; I have displayed some personal courage, and yet they tax me with brutality towards a feeble woman !

“ This, in my mind, is the truth ; and it appears to me that you have not yet heard this truth :—so long as I remain in the donjon of Vincennes, the Marquis of Marignane will never relax. Nobody can counter-balance the influence of the collaterals ; no one can stimulate Emily, who is extremely weak, but a good kind of woman, and loves me. She said to Madame de Vence, ‘ I would give my life’s blood to have him here immediately and without discussion, but this struggle frightens me.’ Such is her character, and thus it will be so long as she is not excited by me ; but I cannot excite her for a million of reasons. Her father says to her, and he is not wrong—‘ What is proved by the agitations of a man who wishes to get out of prison ?’ *Some others* say to her, ‘ What is better than being a widow at six or seven and twenty, with a prospect of a fortune of 60,000 livres a year ?’

And to reply to all this, she has nothing but her recollections of one who appears dead ; for a man is virtually dead when in confinement here. Either I am grossly mistaken, or if I appeared upon the book of life, the bets would be on my side ; but so long as I am unable to pursue a meritorious line of conduct, so long shall I be a lost man. This you yourself feel and admit, when you say that I cannot do *penance* here. True, my being here is not a penance, it is a torture such as neither Busiris nor Nero ever inflicted.

“ But let them place me in a situation to do penance, and then let me judged without appeal*.

“ My uncle is like you, and you are like my uncle ; but he must say a great deal more to me before I give up the hope of his assistance. Has he not assisted, during the last twelve months, in guiding, enlightening and correcting me ? Does he think that, by the weight of his authority, he shall escape from my gratitude ? No, and it shall always be with a full measure of hope that I shall kneel at his feet when I require from him an essential service—a service which he will first refuse, and then render me.

“ Let us return to the task I persevere in attempting. Do you know why I think of the interests of others rather than of my own ? It is because, since my sight has become so bad, and I am therefore obliged to look nearer upon myself for want of sending my glances

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated October 14th 1780.

further off, I have discovered that I am not a very amiable gentleman. And then, do you see, I am at last convinced that the only true mode of enjoyment, is that of making others enjoy. Now, in this business relating to my mother, my father affects an indifference, which is certainly not real, or I am greatly mistaken. His paternal dignity covers, with this mask, his firmness, which struggles with his grief without blunting it. I think then, that to make his old age happy, these brambles must be cut through ; and I will do it or perish.

“ You sounded my father with great ability, but he was far from understanding you ; nor do I think it necessary he should understand you. It is quite natural that he should be discouraged. My advice would be to begin almost without his knowledge, in order that he may not grieve, should the thing fail. I am persuaded, that if we do not let him into the secret until matters are in full progress, that man of strong mind, who appears to have lost none of his energy and vigour, will jump at the idea of a negociation so useful to his house*.”

The reader may judge of the Marquis's feelings on this subject, from the following passage in one of his letters.

“ He (Mirabeau) is, or feigns to be infatuated with this pretended negociation which he thinks important

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated October 18th 1780.

to me, and would indeed be so if the thing were possible. They have put it into his head to make his mother change her opinion, give up all idea of a trial, fix her condition, and settle upon her children what I wished. He pretends he has the power of undeceiving her about *the file biter**. The police, with which he does as he pleases, will serve him, he says, in getting away the persons who are giving his mother bad advice. In short, a masterpiece of intrigue is in agitation, and that is his forte. But I plainly declare, and cause to be declared this very day, that I will not agree to it, nor give myself the ridicule of buying over a mad woman through the agency of a madman. I know the worth of peace and treasure with such people, whose brains are in the moon, whilst their bodies remain here below to gesticulate as the wind directs. I will authorise it only when the mother consents to fix her own condition and that of her children, by an irrevocable deed of settlement. But I will hear of no arrangement of matters†.”

We complete our extracts by transcriptions from the letters in which Mirabeau makes known the variable state of his impressions, and the slow progress of the preparations for his deliverance.

“ I understand you well, but you do not com-

* A nickname given by the Marquis and the Bailli to Madame de Cabris.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated October 28th 1780.

prehend me, because I am in this place, where I must write, as St. John wrote his book of Revelations in the Island of Patmos. You deceive yourself: there will be no murmurs against my half-freedom. People of sense find my frightful detention very long, and of this I have more proof than one. Now, what have I asked for?—and what do I still ask for?—*A more capacious prison*. You appeared to incline in favour of this request: why should you now change? It makes an enormous difference to me, whether I am a prisoner in the *castle* of Vincennes, for instance, or in the *donjon*; but it makes none to the public, because they say, ‘It is intended to give him a trial, and this is but fair. He is always in the King’s hands, and is at the door of the donjon. If he misbehaves, it is easy to open this door, thrust him inside, and close it upon him. If he behaves well, and this man has interesting qualities enough for him to have a trial, why then they are right in what they are doing.’ This would be the language of the public.

“Sum up all, and under every supposition, the rallying cry of all who take interest in me, is ‘*half-freedom, an indispensable preliminary*. For my own part, I repeat and swear to you, that I have only a single cause for impatience—that of my sight; although for the last ten days I have suffered more than ever elsewhere. But I have always looked with coolness at my other complaint, because, if it comes to the stone, it is

like a duel—in five minutes you are cured or dead; there is no blinking. But as regards my sight.... I weep, and you must not be surprised at it. Milton, who, in favour of liberty, was almost as great a fanatic as I am, has written that he would much rather be a slave than lose his sight. In his dramatic poem of *Samson Agonistes*, his hero is in the power of the Philistines, and his eyes are put out. Manoah asks him whether he most regrets his liberty or his sight. ‘My sight,’ Samson replies. Now, dear sister, judge if you can, how horrible the prospect of blindness is to me. The season is come that will complete my blindness, if I am left, the winter through, in a room ten feet square, betwixt smoke and ice*.”

The negociation advanced, however, but the timid prudence of Dupont took the alarm. In a letter to M. Boucher, dated October 18th 1780, he thus expresses himself:—

“Let your wisdom and your kindness, Sir, be joined to my exhortations to impart to our poor friend a prudence that cannot be shaken. He is about to be placed in the *castle*, and I tremble lest he should commit himself there.”

At the same time, Dupont undertook to reply to Sophie, who was making anxious inquiries about the

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated October 15th 1780.

progress of the negotiation. We transcribe part of this reply, not only for the sake of giving variety to our extracts, but also to bring back Sophie for a moment to the reader's attention, from which she has now been some time excluded.

“ Having remained a long time without writing to you, I was afraid you might be a little angry with me; but I did your noble disposition an injustice, and I humbly beg your pardon. . . . I shall not reply to the ridicule which you condescend to throw upon me. I blush a little at having spoken a singular language to my friend, in a letter which I did not suppose you would ever have seen *; but you must have perceived, at all events, that the writer had an honest heart, and was anxious to preserve your rights. The soul of a hero may be lodged in the body of a satyr, but this soul must command him, and for that reason it is a soul. Be assured, Madam, be assured, feeling and generous creature, that I have not all the fears which I exaggerate

* This is an allusion to a letter, written in very free terms, by Dupont, to Mirabeau, advising the latter to resist his mad propensity for women.—*Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes*, vol. i. p. 288.

The publisher of these letters had the impudence to leave entire a most disgusting sentence, the horrible obscenity of which was fully apparent, though veiled by a few initial letters. It appears that complaints were made when the book appeared, and the objectionable passage was omitted before all the copies of the edition were worked off. We possess a copy of this same edition, in which the passage is replaced by dots.

to my friend. Certainly I believe you are capable of defending against all kinds of seduction a heart attached to yourself, which has had the happiness of chaining your own, and the misfortune to bring so many evils upon you. But a general harangues his army, although he knows it to be brave, full of honour, affectionate, and faithful to the King and the state. I should be so sorry if the least accident were to happen to the Count, that I am never weary of preaching to him. I have given him advice, which he also has turned into ridicule, and which is more rigidly moral, although quite as singular, as that to which he referred you. I think we are coming to the denouement of what concerns him. I have gained ground, and much ground, whatever the Count's impatience may induce him to think, since the conversation with his father, who announced to me his freedom. The Marquis appears to have determined, at least in his heart, 1st, that the uncle's consent shall no longer be considered necessary; 2ndly, that the consent of the father-in-law shall also be dispensed with; 3rdly, that the fresh solicitations which the wife dares not make, shall not be waited for.

* * * * *

“ We are well aware that your two causes cannot be separated. Yours is a joint prosecution. If it is abandoned, your freedom is the consequence, even perhaps before the Marquis of Monnier's death. Our object, therefore, is to restore you and the Count to your civil

rights, by some treaty or other, and the best that can be supported by law.

* * * * *

“ My zeal, my advice, and my activity, shall not be wanting in your service. By adding patience and method to our plan, we shall ultimately succeed, especially if you have the same patience. . . . Perhaps my prudence and circumspection may seem to you in contradiction with my temper, which often betrays itself. If so, you may be right ; but, believe me, my soul is germane to yours and to that of our friend ; but it is like an old cousin rendered very prudent by experience, and the ambition of being qualified, with little means, for great undertakings. If the Count is not free when you write to him, tell him to be calm, and to sleep upon my shoulder. Agitation does no good. I am doing all I can, and provided he has confidence and is docile, we shall very soon obtain the victory, which cannot escape us *.”

Mirabeau continued to press his sister.

“ I am too old to take a writing-master. Besides, I love my own scrawling, because it much resembles my father’s hand-writing. Further, it may happen, much sooner than you are aware, that I may not be able to write at all. Therefore, take patience, and, above all, preserve your beautiful eyes.

* Unpublished letter from Dupont de Nemours to Madame de Monnier, dated October 27th 1780.

“ Erase from your opinions, I beg of you, that there was any inconsistency in my demanding horse exercise when afflicted with a nephritic disorder ; for this exercise, together with baths and diuretics, are the only remedies known for that complaint. The gravel and these nephritic pains are two distinct things, although the one may lead to the other. In short,—but I have no business thus to weary you,—I am no physician, but I am a physiologist. Besides, every medical man consulted in my case has prescribed horse exercise ; in consequence of which, last winter, when the pain in my loins had become dreadful, by a very unusual favour, I was made to trot up and down a garden only thirty paces long. I have been better for it all the summer. When I perspire I am very well, with the exception of sight and sleep, which, like false friends, that is to say, like ninety-nine hundredth parts of the human race, flee from the unfortunate. When I am unable to perspire I am in a deplorable state. But this is the least of my cares, distinct from my sight ; therefore I will not annoy you any further with this matter, as regards either the past, the present, or the future. People may form on the subject whatever opinions they please.

* * * * *

“ I will not, either, talk to you about that lamentable past, for my faults come not from myself alone, and yet I will accuse myself only.

“Madame de Mirabeau has not yet shown you, and probably never will show you, the letter I wrote to her from Pontarlier, before my escape, and even prior to my being intoxicated with the philtres of love. I know not what they understand by a ‘threatening note.’ This letter filled eight pages, and that is surely not a ‘note.’ If in my last day I must appear before the Sublime Reason which presides over nature, I shall say, ‘I am covered with enormous stains; but I wrote that letter, and thou alone knowest, great God, whether I should now be as guilty as I am, had I received a proper reply!’

“My dear sister, I despair of my destiny;—do you know wherefore? Because I see that my truest accents find every heart closed against them. Well, well!—let me be resigned! But when I perceive that I persuaded every body when I was a bad man, and that I can move nobody now that I am penetrated with a desire to do good, I am tempted to say with Brutus—‘Oh, virtue! art thou but a vain name?’ You will think me ungrateful in using the expression, ‘I can move nobody.’ But I am not so; for you all assist me merely from pity. Very well! know my mind, then: I am further from being converted than you think, perhaps; for I am so proud, that the idea of owing any thing to pity tears my heart to shreds.

* * * * *

“I think, my kind and noble-hearted sister, that if

to forgive readily is a defect, it is a sublime one. Now, my father, your husband, and yourself, have all forgiven me so easily for things so little worthy of pardon, that you ought not to preach such a principle.

* * * * *

“ I owe it in justice to Madame de Mirabeau to say thus much :—I know, beyond a doubt, that, at the bottom of her heart, she thinks me scarcely at all culpable towards her. This feeling, apparently exaggerated by her generosity, does her infinite honour, and the more so, because she has mentioned it to a woman whom she fears and respects. Nothing but this alone raised in me a desire to be reconciled to her, and I never really felt myself culpable towards her but at this moment. The truth is, however, that she resides in a place of perdition, if it be a second Tourves*—a place where the most lofty mind and the strongest tempered soul would lose much of their energy. Judge, then, what will happen to her who has neither a lofty mind nor a strongly tempered soul, but who, though very ill brought up, was born to be reasonable, and would probably have been so if I had not been very foolish, and of too high and unequal a flight for her. This is perhaps a mode of speaking that will offend you ; if so, I am wrong ; but, either I am mistaken, or you ought to perceive by it that I have reflected, and know (too

* An allusion to the mansion of the Count of Valbelle, then dead, which Mirabeau termed the “ Palace of Sardanapalus.”

late, it is true),—but that I *do* know those by whom you are surrounded.

“ I am in despair about the business so truly important to my heart*. You must understand me. HERE I CAN DO NOTHING, nor even attempt the least thing ; and if I leave this place blind or infirm, I can do nothing anywhere. Take care, my dear sister, that I do not say ‘ I *will* do nothing.’ ‘ I will do all that is necessary whether possible or impossible,’ is the saying of a weak man, or of one that is becoming so ; but I shall always repeat ‘ HERE I CAN DO NOTHING.’

“ My dear sister, you see your brother as he now is, not as he was. For a vast and lofty mind, he has too little connexion in his ideas, which is an immense defect ; but he has an indomitable will, and this in some degree compensates for the defect. Consider how this will be sharpened now that I have to regain esteem, affection, respect, existence, and fortune. Oh my good and worthy supporters, do not let me waste my strength in building mud walls ! My body is already much worn out. My heart is honest, noble, and tender—pray believe this : it is horribly compressed—pray dilate it a little. My head is still tumultuous and unformed (and where the devil could it have been formed ? I have hitherto lived only to commit follies, or to remain in prison). Very well !—you shall guide my head ; its tool, that is to say, its

* The attempt at a negotiation between his father and mother.

intellect, is ingenuous and powerful; put a handle to it. Good God!—we are losing the most valuable time. Be sure, that by dint of zeal, honour, and exertion, you will make of me, and I shall make of myself, all that you wish. But present the magic buckler; make my fetters drop off. Certainly they are not flowers, but I will shake myself. You will then see me suddenly grown six feet taller. Your brother talks wildly; in future he will be below no situation whatever . . . ! No, dear sister, no; *let us build no castles*; let us raise our scaffolding first. But where shall we place it?—we have no ground to rest it upon. I am dead; restore me to life!

“ You will, perhaps, think this the letter of a madman; but lend me your eyes, and give me time, thirty or forty sheets of paper, and liberty to say all I think, and it shall no longer be the letter of a madman. I embrace you with extreme tenderness; I love and thank you from the bottom of my soul. And now that I have again crept into my shell, I am as measured, as resigned, and as patient as a snail *.”

Whether Mirabeau had been carried away by his feelings, or had calculated his effects, we are unable to say; but he hit rather too hard in these last letters. This fully appears in the following extracts taken from his sister's replies.

“ Good God!—your last letter contained an expression

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated October 25th 1780.

that might have ruined us for ever ! You do not seem to recollect that he upon whom your fate depends has so high a notion of filial respect, which he still practises so earnestly even towards the memory of his parents, that I fear his sense of paternal dignity, and the duties it imposes, will prove the greatest obstacle to your being fully satisfied. I fear also that your thoughtless pleadings will spoil all with him and our uncle, who dislikes and mistrusts eloquence. But what I am sure of is this : had our father seen the following passage in your handwriting : ‘ People of sense find my frightful detention too long,’ he would have told me very seriously that the care of remedying its length must be left to those people of sense, and would have forbidden me to speak to him any more on the subject. For heaven’s sake, then, express only sorrow for the past *.”

This was the point which Mirabeau had reached after more than forty months of the most rigorous captivity †. His sister’s letter affected him the more, because he supposed it had been dictated, nor was his

* Unpublished letter from Madame du Saillant to Mirabeau, dated October 19th 1780.

† Dupont was well aware of the feelings of the Marquis, or rather those of Madame de Pailly ; for, a few days subsequently, he wrote as follows :—

“ The people of Bignon would be well pleased with a pretence for being angry. Be very severe with regard to the letters he (Mirabeau) writes.—*Unpublished letter from Dupont to Boucher, dated October 30th 1780.*

conjecture wrong. We have the rough draught of this letter, in the hand-writing of Garçon, the Marquis's secretary. This new affliction, however, did not make Mirabeau lose sight of his own dignity.

"The little you say to me," he wrote to his sister, "has contracted my heart, which you are determined not to know. In truth, my dear sister, I will show you the very bottom of my soul, for it contains nothing but what is correct and praiseworthy; and, I repeat, that sensible people find my imprisonment too long, without thinking that the meaning of this expression can be equivocal, when it is written by the same hand that has traced the following:—

"‘My father, sitting upon the judgment seat of his domestic tribunal, and condemning me to death for the offences I have committed against him, would appear to me just. But my father's keeping me here, is to me a frightful example of what ages of inertness, or bad laws, may take from the greatest men, either by relaxing their principles, or by not leaving them masters of the means.’

"This paragraph is, I trust, nobly felt, and one of profound thought. You read it to my father, and you did well; for to speak to him of strong minds is to speak of his own mental power. Did you see that he was offended at it? Well!—what more do I mean by saying that people of sense find my detention too long? People of sense say: ‘That man is either incurable or—

he is not: if he is, why is his name mentioned? Let him be sent to Sumatra or to Java, [this was thought of long before he committed his serious offences,] and let him be drowned during the voyage. If he is not incurable, has he not lost sufficient by losing the best years of his life?—by losing his health and sight? In good faith, is this, joined to so many other causes of suffering, and to the puncture of remorse, no punishment?’

“ I confess that this language does not appear to me unreasonable; nor will I ever believe that my father thinks it so, and sees in it an abjuration of the remorse which will pursue me to the grave.

“ With regard to this other expression, ‘ that it is the duty of every quiet and humane man to deprive of his freedom him who used it only to injure others,’ I know and respect the force of mind and loftiness of soul of him who wrote it; and it is on that account that if I ever see that person again, I pledge myself to make him admit that such an action would place mankind under the abominable law of despotism, the most frightful of evils and the most atrocious of crimes. The principle itself is unjust, and its application proves nothing; for nobody disputes— and I, less than anybody—that when I committed injury, I deserved to lose my freedom;—but who dares to say,—‘ If he recovered his freedom he would again commit injury?’

“ I never fancied anything easy: but if I argued a

hundred thousand years, you would not understand me. My legs are tied and I can only jump ; untie them and I will walk. . . Dear sister, pray make my heart expand a little, by writing me a letter in a more confiding strain. You have pained me much, and I deserve it not. At all events, may the news of your complete recovery give me a joy which I defy you to mutilate*.”

* * * * *

“ My dear and kind sister, the surgeon whom I laugh at, and also Dupont and my other friend (Boucher), whom I must obey, have made me promise and swear that I will not write, whatever happens to me : 1st, on account of my sight ; 2ndly, on account of my *incredible* ill health ; 3rdly, (and this is perhaps the true reason) because my mind, being cruelly agitated, does not allow me to give sufficient clearness to my thoughts, which spring up as from the bottom of a Vesuvius. Notwithstanding all this, and at the risk of committing perjury, I must tell you : 1st, that I will say nothing to you concerning the two first pages of your letter, (no, upon my honour, unless I can write a folio volume in reply,) except to declare that for the last forty-one months, I have been thinking of the best means to console Madame de Ruffey ; and that in this particular point, for the last forty-one months, I have

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated October 29th 1780.

behaved in a manner to satisfy every honest man. This you will admit some day. 2ndly, I tell you, that if you intend to quiz me with your ‘lofty intellect’ and ‘strong mind,’ I reply to you most simply, that I think I possess these two things, and would sell them for twopence, if any one would buy them of me; further, I would give one of my limbs into the bargain to any body who would take them off my hands in exchange for a cool head and a supple heart! Therefore laugh at me until you are tired. 3rdly, I tell you that I know of nothing more insipid than *common sense*; but I know of nothing more rare and valuable than *good sense*. Therefore be so good, if you wish me to understand you, not to confound the two, and the more so, as you yourself possess the latter. 4thly, You none of you know me at all, and, what is worse, you never will; because if you lived to the age of Methusaleh you would always see in me the youth of twenty. Thus is human nature constituted. 5thly, The warmth and tumult of my elocution prove nothing in favour of my thoughts; and the effervescence or the convulsions (if you are pleased so to call them) of a man in my situation prove nothing for or against his state in a natural situation, and in a calmer medium; thus your sentence—‘if you forget yourself, even in prison, what will you do when you are in the world?’ is wholly devoid of logic; which is not very surprising, for I believe you never were forty-one months in prison. But the

persons who know that the strongest heads are turned in this place, are here very thankful that they are not mad, and they well examine themselves every day to ascertain that they are not so. Further, they are somewhat surprised when they are told that their *punishment* (observe well, that this is your own word, and a fine handle it gives me against you) has not been long enough. 6thly, I must observe (and I trust that you will not, therefore, tax me with self-love, for, seriously speaking, it would be a contemptible sort of self-love), that I have succeeded in every thing I have taken an interest in doing, even in the extremest and most difficult acts of folly; and in truth, good appears to me much easier to do than evil. 7thly, I tell you that I am waiting with a confidence, faith! not very patient, but sincere, complete and tender, for all that you will obtain, and my father grant. 8thly, I tell you that your parody is nonsense, for I am uglier than you ever saw me, if that be possible; and that, in spite of Dupont's ridiculous fears, I am Thersites and not the urchin of Cythera.

“ Lastly, I tell you, with reference to the remainder of your letter, that if the consent of the Marquis of Marignane is insisted upon, I shall be here in 1800, it being fully understood that, long before, I shall have passed from the animal to the vegetable kingdom. This I can assure you of. But I would stake my head (the stake of a madman, you will say) that, if I were free,

the collaterals would before eighteen months had elapsed, be in their proper places—that is to say, at their own houses; and I would increase the income derived from the Mariguane estate 50,000 livres a year more, by draining those immense and unwholesome bogs—an art I fully learned in Holland*.”

* * * * *

“I am too ill and in too great pain to write. Your poor brother is sinking, and nothing more is wanting to his evil destiny but to be unable to receive his true pardon, and reap its fruits.

“Speaking of punishments, commutations of punishments, and so forth, and in order that you may mention the subject to me no more, I confess to you that I hold in horror the atrocity of our criminal laws, and do not believe that there is an enlightened honest man upon earth, who, having studied them as I have done, is not of my opinion. These things are beyond the province of women. Present to me the morality of the heart, embellish it with the charms of your sex and your affection, and you will in every respect be doing me a great service; but unhappily for me, I know more than you do about the defects of our political institutions.

“My father, in what you have written to me, repeats a most sensible saying of his friend Richardson; but the saying is badly translated. Richardson makes one

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated November 6th 1780.

of his characters observe that proverbs are an extract of the sense of all ages and nations, the universal reason. Both Richardson and my father are right. Observe well—for I must explain every thing—I do not this time speak of plagiarism, I only say that my father has met Richardson's idea, and I think it does him credit.

“When I talk of *you both*, I mean yourself and your husband, whom I consider two minds united for my salvation: you from kindness, and sensibility of heart and kindred; he from nobleness and generosity and attachment to my father, whose bowels of compassion are moved by my misfortunes and your intercession. Ask me, as much as you please, for an explanation of my words, for to you I use no ambiguous expression.

“Adieu! How happy am I to find that you have recovered your health, and at having received some of your hand-writing to day. Take care of yourself, and *ora pro nobis*!*”

We find in a letter from Boucher that the steps taken to procure Mirabeau's release were at length on the point of proving successful.

“As it was feared that the Marquis of Mirabeau would not readily make up his mind to apply personally to the ministers for his son's release, it has been agreed upon that Madame du Saillant shall write to M. Amelot

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated November 14th 1780.

and M. Lenoir. On the receipt of these letters, we are to write to the Marquis, and on receiving his reply, the order will be despatched *”.

Mirabeau also continued his exertions.

“He is incomprehensible,” wrote the Marquis, “for his talent of usurpation and the ascendancy he assumes. He has sent his sister copies of two letters, one to M. de Maurepas, the other to M. Nivernois, extremely well written in a strain of repentance, and of submission to his father ; but also in such a strain that Francis I. could not have left his prison with greater dignity. There was forthwith, a reply from the Duke, who ‘ will be very happy,’ and so forth, and *Monsieur le Comte* at full length †. On the other hand my daughter, in conjunction with her husband, wrote to M. de Maurepas for the order ; and lastly, I am informed from

* Unpublished letter from Boucher, dated November 17th 1780.

† On the 19th of November 1780, the Duke of Nivernois wrote to Mirabeau as follows :—

“I cannot but be greatly edified by the sentiments you express to me. You ought not to doubt that the moment the families to which you belong have agreed to procure you the satisfaction you desire, I shall readily concur in it. I hasten to assure you of this immediately, *notwithstanding my present cruel situation.*”

This latter sentence refers to the recent loss of his sister-in-law, Madame de Watteville, and of his favourite daughter, widow, for the last twenty-two years, of the Count of Gisors, who was killed at the battle of Crevelt, and whose premature death extinguished the house of Marshal Belleisle, and caused a general mourning. We think it due to the memory of the venerable Duke of Nivernois to relate this act of kindness so rare and so affecting.

high authority that the letter to the minister is to be sent to me for my opinion *."

Mirabeau thanked his sister for what she had done ; but she had written only to M. de Maurepas.

" It appears to me," he wrote, " that we forget M. Lenoir, to whom I am under great personal obligations, and whose kindness to me I can never forget, if I would. If you were to write to him a polite note, which he might know came not from yourself alone, it would be of very great advantage to me †."

He wrote to M. Boucher on the same subject.

" Tell me, is it not necessary that I should write directly to M. Lenoir? You cannot doubt my having a full sense of all I owe him. You are his inspirer ; but then he has *allowed* himself, and still *allows* himself, to be inspired. It would seem as if my family considered him and M. Ancelot nothing at all in this business ; and I am anxious to know from you what I ought to do to repair this neglect. I have an excellent chancellor in you ; but do you not want a letter that you can show ‡?"

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to his brother the Bailli, dated November 21st 1780.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated November 17th 1780.

‡ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, same date as the preceding.

The Marquis was urging a similar step in favour of Dupont, and we consider it a duty to the memory of this friend of the family, to insert here the paragraph relating to him.

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It now appeared ready for the happy denouement, in an unfortunate circumstance intervened.

It is now very clear to me, that he dictates in letters of police; but it seems that his friends in authority have rejected the labour, in order to expedite letters more rapidly; for with such minds as theirs, must be dramatic, and performed, according to rule, within the twenty-four hours. They have taken it upon their heads to do him the honours of an accommodation between his mother and me; and to say the truth, this is my own plan, and the only one to which I am attached from duty, as it alone can secure to my children rights for which they have paid dearly enough. As I perceived, however, that my wish was too much calculated upon, I declared, what I wrote to you, that I would authorise the mother,

"As in your letter to Honoré you mention the Chevalier Scépeaux and Boucher, but not Dupont, who has taken the greatest pains of any, to hammer, unstuff, and furbish up that head-piece of his, and who has stuck to him and still sticks to him through thick and thin, I should feel obliged if you would write him a polite letter upon the event. It will flatter him much, because he has great respect for you, and is one of those who must be led by elasticity."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 9th 1781.*

We must also add that, notwithstanding a very marked difference in political opinions, Mirabeau always preserved a great regard for Dupont. In a letter from the former dated from Bignon, August 3rd 1781, we find some very flattering verses addressed to Dupont on the occasion of his birth-day. We do not insert them here, because Mirabeau, as he himself admits, with a good grace, had no talent for poetry.

according to law, to make any settlement upon her children ; but I would not have my name mentioned in the settlement, nor would I have any accommodation, for I do not require it. These people have, no doubt, been desirous of giving me the spur ; for they have suddenly put her cause upon the list for hearing, on the 5th of December, in full court. The cause is nothing ; but to drag me suddenly into court, when my friends can scarcely have time to be present, seems to me a hocus-pocus trick. Nevertheless, I have not stirred a peg ; but I have plainly told them that I ought to bind the fetters tighter instead of loosening them ; and I have suspended the forwarding of the letters from my children to the ministers, until I receive a promise of adjournment of the cause until after New-year's day*."

Dupont became the more alarmed at this new obstacle, because he well knew the Marquis's unbending obstinacy.

" Oh ! good angel ! instead of advancing, we run the risk of retrograding, but as besiegers retrograde from the breach when they are shot down into the ditch. The Marquis of Mirabeau tells us, point blank, that if we stir he will disavow everything, and God only knows whither such a disavowal would lead us†."

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau dated November 26th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from Dupont to Boucher, dated November 23rd 1780.

It appears, however, that the condition was soon fulfilled, if we may judge from the following passage in a letter dated the next day.

“ I have to inform you, that at the same time the order for his release is given I shall have a *lettre de cachet* that will keep him always under my thumb*.

* The Marquis depended too much upon his interest with the government. We perceive, in fact, that the ministers determined Mirabeau should remain at the disposal of the King, not of his father. Thus, on the 2nd of December, M. Lenoir wrote to the Marquis as follows :—“ The king’s order will point out to your son his future place of residence.” Five days subsequently, the same magistrate wrote to M. Ancelot :—

“ In conformity to your desire, I have written to the Marquis of Mirabeau a letter, of which a copy is enclosed ; and I also have the honour of enclosing a copy of his reply. You will thereby perceive that the settlement of this business depends upon a condition which the Marquis of Mirabeau has no right to impose. He demands that the King’s order, which enjoins his son to reside in the place pointed out by him, be addressed to himself, in order that he may act as he thinks proper. The Marquis du Saillant, his son-in-law, to whom I explained how contrary this arbitrary act would be to justice, begged that you would be so obliging as to write to the Marquis of Mirabeau, enclosing to him a copy of the King’s order, such as I shall receive it ; and state to him that this order will be addressed to me that I may see to the observance of the necessary forms, in order that, should he propose that the King’s commands be carried into effect in any other place, I may, according to any letter he may write to me, receive your instructions and act according to his intentions.”

We find that the Marquis at length, whatever reason he may have had, yielded, contrary to his usual custom.

“ I find, sir, that the regulations throw a difficulty in the way of the form of order which my children had flattered themselves they

On the 10th of December he will be at the castle, incognito, boarding at the surgeon's house*. The gentleman will now play his great game to get what he can out of his mother. In fine, if this man of semi-freedom minds what he is about, and can refrain from offending his friends and spoiling his own case, he will rule the ministers of the old system, that is to say, ministers of a fluid disposition,—mere effigies †."

We have reason to believe that what the Marquis mistook for "a hocus-pocus trick" was nothing but a

should obtain in behalf of their brother. They, better than any body else, well knew that the principle of it, or at least an equivalent, was necessary to place me, and the sort of confidence which a long life free from crime and fraud may have inspired, between this young man and the enemies which his past conduct has raised up against him. They trust that they shall obtain this equivalent. But in the meanwhile they represent to me that their brother is suffering; and that having once decided upon his present fate, I cannot wish that any delays of reports and correspondence should defer the promised relief. I therefore, sir, have determined to put into your hands the present memorandum of what I now wish in this matter: that he may still remain under your authority during the first moment of his half-freedom; that he may have the castle of Vincennes for his prison, but that he live there as unknown and retired as possible, and bear the name of M. Honoré. Your kindness, which has always been so useful to him, is more necessary to him than ever. Condescend, sir, to continue it to him, and not to doubt my gratitude."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to M. Lenoir, dated December 8th 1780.*

* The surgeon Fontelliau, who is often mentioned in the "Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes."

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 27th 1780.

very natural circumstance, brought about by causes which had no reference to Mirabeau. The latter thus wrote to Madame du Saillant, on the occasion.

“My kind sister, do you think your poor brother very much alarmed? He is much grieved, but his father has consoled him with a word. The accident is perhaps fortunate which gives me an opportunity of showing him that on his making but a sign, I can always resign myself to patience and suffering*.”

Two days after, Mirabeau explained himself to his brother-in-law.

“The generosity of your language is in keeping with your conduct. You wish to have news of my health: it is not at all good. In fact, the rent which you are repairing with so much zeal, has I confess affected me; and as I think I owe it to my father, to my friends, to myself, to respect, to gratitude, and to the dignity of man, to show myself calm and resigned, my inside has been some what ravaged by this exertion, which, after all, was the least I could do in return for the concern which you, my sister, Dupont, and all my other friends displayed on the appearance of this new difficulty†.

In spite of all obstacles, however, the hour of freedom at length struck.

“This day is announced to me as one of regeneration

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated December 8th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to the Marquis du Saillant, dated December 8th 1780.

and safety. It is now twelve o'clock: will not your husband come and enjoy his triumph *?"

"Dear sister, let your kind heart palpitate, for I have embraced your husband, I have pressed him in my arms, and felt myself pressed in his. I already enjoy this greatest of benefactions—I who scarcely dared invoke pity and indulgence†."

We have a few particulars to give relative to this long looked for event.

"I very much regretted, that with your kind heart you were not present at your brother's release from confinement. But your place was worthily supplied by the Marquis du Saillant. When they met, both were so affected, that neither could advance a single step. It was necessary to support them when they were in each others arms‡.

"Du Saillant, who went to deliver his brother-in-law, is highly satisfied with him in every respect, and he is no enthusiast. He expected to have found a good deal of bathos and stage effect; instead of which he saw a man much affected, very repentant, extremely submissive, and full of feeling, according to the exaggeration of his enthusiastic temperament,

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated December 13th 1780. This date belies that of the December 17th given by P. Chaussard as that of Mirabeau's release

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, with same date.

‡ Unpublished letter from Dupont de Nemours to Madame du Saillant, same date as preceding.

towards his father and his family, but at the same time quick and spirited with regard to others. As he disposes of the police, although he cannot leave Vincennes, they took him to Paris to clothe him, for he came out with scarcely a rag to cover him*. He

* This fact, and the avowal of it, which require no comment, are confirmed by numerous details in the "Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes," Vol. I, pages 45 & 127; Vol. II, pages 28, 39, 40, and 41; Vol. III, pages 46, 91, 94, 158, 436, and 581; Vol. IV, pages 150, and 165; and also by several passages in the letters we possess. We will quote from an unpublished letter, dated June 7th 1779, in which Mirabeau says to Boucher: "I am in want of every thing it is true, but the least of my privations in my confinement during the present season, is my want of clothes. Let us attend to the most pressing matters; at most I shall have two jackets and two pair of nankeen trowsers made, if I find I cannot do without them."

We also insert an extract which must excite interest with reference to Mirabeau's poverty, and does honour to his character.

"With regard to clothes, though naked, I will still take patience on young Lavisé's account.

[This young man, son of a turnkey of the donjon, copied Mirabeau's manuscripts, and acted as his secretary.]

"This young fellow, whose natural abilities are good, has the demon of the drama in his head. Le Kain instilled it into him, gave him lessons, and formed him without the knowledge of his father, who now trembles lest he should engage himself in some provincial company of players. The best means of turning his mind from this, is to occupy him and supply him with a little money. It must be admitted that he earns some. I wish, therefore, that you would share what you have of mine between him and Sophie."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated July 9th 1779.*

Mirabeau did not limit his kindness to this single act, for he wrote some time after,—

"The next time you see Lavisé, the son, have the goodness to ask him rather seriously, what connexion he has with travelling

lodged at the house of the clerk of the secret office [Boucher], who always governs him. He went with his brother-in-law to see the Duke of Nivernois, and got through his visit nobly, and with an air of protection. He has grown taller *, and much stouter ; and he says that if I am aware of this physical revolution in him, so extraordinary at his age, it will give me some faith in his mental revolution. He has, however, always a tendency to determination of blood to the head, and on the very day of his release he inundated his bed by a bleeding at the nose. He went next day to see his brother-in-law, who showed him the hotel †. On seeing my portrait, he was much agitated, and burst into tears, uttering only the words—‘ My poor father !’ In short, du Saillant does not cease saying that Dupont

theatres, and plays on the Boulevards, and to speak to him with contempt of these things.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated August 22nd 1780.*

* On this subject the Bailli wrote:—“ He and I, in this respect, are alike ; for I am assured that I grew several lines taller, from twenty-eight to thirty years of age.”—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 31st 1780.* The Bailli was nearly six feet * high.

“ I am not much surprised at what you state, because I am assured that the same thing happened to myself, and that from twenty-eight to thirty years of age, I grew several lines taller.”—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Madame du Saillant, dated January 1st 1781.*

† Mirabeau also relates the impression it made upon him.

“ What I felt was so acute, that another strong emotion crossing

* Nearly six feet six inches, English measure.—TR.

must have hammered him dreadfully. Without wanting faith in this particular, I have still more in the efficacy of bolts and bars, and turnkeys. Forty-two months spent in a place where there is no other society than gothic and gloomy dungeons, and the night howlings from the subterranean vaults and other neighbourhoods, constitute a species of physic that may well remodel a man's mind. Human nature requires misfortune. But we have not yet reached the conclusion; and I will guarantee his wife from his enthusiasm as well as from his follies—the whole as in duty bound *."

The duration and severity of this confinement in the donjon of Vincennes—the general impression produced by the publication of Manuel's collection, and the unfavourable prejudices which it has cast upon Mirabeau's memory—the influence which so long a detention must necessarily have exercised over the prisoner's subsequent career, over his studies, his opinions, his systems, his resolutions, and his private and public life,—have induced us to give this deplorable episode at greater length, by extending the extracts which explain, and, we trust, show it under a new aspect. Once

it, my eyes were covered with a cloud, my head ran round, and I was obliged quickly to get a chair, with such a confusion of ideas as the sight of the universe crumbling to dust around me would not have raised."—*Unpublished letter to Madame du Saillant, dated December 19th 1780.*

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 20th 1780.

beyond this particular period of persecution, which stands out in such strong relief in the midst of even a whole life of persecution, we are bound to make our narrative proceed more rapidly, in order to reach those subsequent periods, where important matters will again arrest our progress, and detain us some time.

BOOK X.

HAVING now concluded the principal episode of our work, four books more will enable us to complete the history of Mirabeau's *private* life. Before we proceed with our narrative, however, we may be allowed to dwell for a moment upon the character of an individual to whom we shall scarcely have occasion to allude in Mirabeau's *public* life, and whose absence our readers will perhaps regret, because his mind is equally terse, original, and elevated.

Though we have shown the Marquis of Mirabeau in an unexpected light, we have perhaps drawn him rather under than above his due proportions. Perhaps also, from our fault, the reader has been unable to perceive how much of virtue and of the kindly feelings of human nature were concealed under his inconceivable harshness as a father—how much of lofty knowledge and sincere and generous philanthropy, under pride of lineage, and the vanity of being the chief of a sect.

Our present undertaking is to write the life of Mirabeau, not that of his father. We therefore consider ourselves bound to give, concerning the latter, only such matters as tend to the development of his son's character. But these matters consist wholly of writings and acts of severity; and every thing beyond them which could place the Marquis of Mirabeau in a very different light—that is to say, not in that of a harsh father, but in that of a man and a philosopher—would be merely episodic, and therefore out of place. Had we introduced these things as our narrative advanced, incoherence and prolixity would have been the consequence, and the natural course of events would have been continually interrupted. It was our duty therefore to avoid this, in order not only to preserve unity in our work, but to keep its main object always in view, or at least to take care that our readers did not too often deviate from the direct road by which we were leading them towards it. The system we are bound to pursue is therefore not very favourable to the memory of the Marquis of Mirabeau. But as the character of this individual commands our respect, which, if possible, we would willingly communicate to the public, we think that before we reach that period of our work when the name of this really high-minded man will be mentioned no more, it behoves us to add a few touches to the portrait we have already given of him. These additions will show him to have been a much

better man than he has hitherto appeared; and they are the more to be relied on as they are taken from letters which he wrote without any pretension, and the future publication of which it was impossible he could have foreseen.

We therefore transcribe some short extracts from another series of important letters written by the Marquis of Mirabeau. These letters form no part of the family correspondence, from which we have already taken so much, and shall continue to extract throughout this work. The following fragments belong to a series of letters quite unknown to the public. They were written to a learned Italian, the Marquis Longo, first professor of political economy and afterwards librarian of the Brevia at Milan. From this voluminous collection, we have selected portions referring to the studies and writings of the Marquis of Mirabeau, to questions of religious philosophy, and even to politics; and these selections are given in the Appendix to the present volume, to which we trust the reader will turn, excited not only by the curiosity which we hope we have raised in him with regard to this singular man, but likewise by the merit of his letters themselves, so original, so picturesque, and so well suited to the modern taste of innovation and boldness of style. In this latter quality the Marquis of Mirabeau was very remarkable, and he jocularly characterises it in the following paragraphs, which we transcribe as a conclusion to this digression.

“I thank you for your indulgence regarding my style, which I should be ashamed of, if I had not swallowed all my shame long ago. I wish I had less deserved your indulgence; but having been educated in a mountain castle, with my three brothers, by a private tutor at thirty crowns* a year, and thrown into a regiment to live in idleness at thirteen years of age, I had no master until I was three and twenty. He was an excellent and patient Aristarchus, one of the best and most prudent writers of the present age†; but he was unable to temper my vivacity, which carried me too far. A warm, rich and germinating heart rendered the epistolary style familiar to me. Having naturally a good ear, I could have worked up my prose as Boileau did his verses; but I never cared about it; and if Rousseau, for instance, had been troubled with my business, my family, or my station, he would have been unable to write a single volume after his own fashion. Now, your humble servant, independently of what will be published, which is perhaps as voluminous as all you have seen, has fifty quarto and twelve folio volumes at least of what is really nothing but scribbling. Abundance, I know, is the nature of the wild plum-tree; and provided it yields wherewith to supply the people with a good drink, it would be a pity to

* Less than £4 sterling.—Tr.

† Mirabeau, as we have already stated, spoke in the same terms of Lefranc of Pompignan.

lop off any of its branches or to graft it in order to produce four or five fine plums for the table of an epicure*.”

“My style, formed like an oyster-shell, is so overcharged with different layers of ideas, that to make it intelligible would require a punctuation invented on purpose, were it worth the trouble. But what would be the use of an invention at this period of inter-regnum, marked by a relaxation of all literary discipline in our language, which, like our army, is never in want of any thing but generals. What would it avail at this present time, when my sentences, instead of being drawn up in proper line of review and battle, are, in my editions, most of them orphans†, so confused, even by the punctuation, that I can no longer understand them myself; but what must they be when words are substituted, which some invisible and facetious imp appears to have selected on purpose to produce absurd and laughable blunders. As I have risked many new expressions, I am much exposed to rash opinions, which I admit I deserve; but it follows that I am not understood. What a pity‡!”

“ * * * * * Notwithstanding all

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated January 17th 1777.

† Almost all the works of the Marquis of Mirabeau were published in foreign countries, and anonymously.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated August 28th 1777.

* Same letter. In right of his wife, the Marquis had the title of "First Baron of Limoges."

own way to render me intelligible. For instance, I had written: "A conqueror cannot bear to *see himself passed*;" but the good man judiciously substituted "to be surpassed."

We now resume our narrative.

Mirabeau having quitted the donjon of Vincennes, undertook, before he did any thing else, to obtain his mother's consent to a private deed of separation from the Marquis, in order to put an end to the scandalous lawsuit between them, now on the eve of being brought to a public trial. He employed all his eloquence to soothe the Marchioness, and make her enter into his views. This fact is confirmed by a letter inserted in the Vincennes collection, which is one of the most eloquent that Mirabeau ever penned*. On this occasion, his father did him justice.

"I am able to say on my honour and conscience, that following up close, as I do, the very active pace of Mr. Honoré†, I find that he goes straight-forward on the right road, frankly and warmly, and with a good heart. Nothing in the world, or even in the universe, is so impossible as the matter he has taken in hand. The harsh features of the Count may smoke as they list, nothing good and useful can proceed from the

* Original letters from Vincennes, vol. iv. pages 58 to 67. Three other equally remarkable letters are to be found in vol ii. pp. 12—291, and vol. iv. p. 305.

† The reader must bear in mind, that Mirabeau, on leaving his prison, was to bear the name only of Honoré.

parallax of their two heads; but he, and his agents whom I perceive to be much discouraged, will fully discover, at least, what my *respectable adverse party* is*. Yesterday, for the twentieth time, he saw his mother, not *tête-à-tête*—for he cannot succeed in obtaining a private conference—but in the presence of Berthelot, Mazurier, and the Abbé Lariou†. The result is that Berthelot is to bring him, this morning, proposals of conditions. The storming, the passion, the fury, the rage, and the madness which he witnessed, leave him little hope that these proposals will be reasonable. The moon will decide the question‡.”

Mirabeau failed in his attempt, the success of which was rendered impossible by a variety of circumstances, all explained in the letter before us, but upon which we shall dwell no longer, because the fact itself, which is only of secondary importance, not having been alluded to by any of Mirabeau's former biographers, we are not bound to enter into minute explanations. This plan of silence upon certain topics we always pursue whenever we meet with circumstances, quite unknown to the public, which are better buried in oblivion, and their omission does not injure our narra-

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 26th 1780.

† The Marchioness of Mirabeau's agents, by whom she was governed.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated December 31st 1780.

tive. On the present occasion we are content to state that Mirabeau's exertions had no other effect than that of irrevocably alienating from himself the affections of his mother*, who, till then, had dearly loved him. Her perverse advisers had brought her to consider her son the accomplice of their joint persecutor, the moment he ceased to be his father's victim.

Before we quit this subject, we must notice an imputation which has been often and wrongfully cast upon Mirabeau, that of writing libels alternately upon his father at the instigation of his mother, and upon the latter at the command of his father.

Mirabeau himself states that he never published but one statement, which was written in Holland†; that scarcely one half of it was of his own composition‡; that it was as hastily written, as it was inconsiderate and criminal;—it was, in short, “begun, copied, printed, and distributed in a week§.” His grief and indignation induced him to grant this to the grief and indignation of the Marchioness of Mirabeau,

* This fact is attested by the following passage in a letter from Sophie, dated January 18th 1781.

“You are then at variance with your mother. How could she resist your arguments, your tenderness, and her own affection? She is running headlong to her ruin; this greatly affects me, for she was so kind to us, especially to me!”

† Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 70.

‡ Ibid. vol. ii. p. 414. The remainder was written by Groubert de Groubental, the advocate whose signature it bore.

§ Ibid. vol. iii. p. 236.

who thought herself and him implicated in a most monstrous accusation*. The mistake of biographers, who suppose him guilty several times of the same thing, originates first, in the strong expressions used by the Marchioness, who, in the several cases published by her, deploras her son's misfortunes; and secondly, in the care she took to republish, in a case drawn up for her by Lacroix Frainville, an advocate who afterwards acquired great and well merited celebrity, the letters written by Mirabeau from Dijon to M. de Malesherbes, soliciting his release from prison, and a revision of the judgment against him by default in the case of Villeneuve Moans†. Mirabeau, who took every opportunity of explaining this business, refers to it in one of his testamentary letters, from which we have extracted in a former part of this work; we allude to the one he wrote to his father on the 2nd of May 1779, after he had made preparations for committing suicide, which he was deterred from doing by the humanity of M. Lenoir. He expresses himself in the following terms.

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. iii. pp. 100, 416, 481. We have before quoted from a letter in which the Marquis of Mirabeau himself speaks of "the most atrocious and most perfidious suggestions" which misled his son. This expression proves that the horrible accusation which could only have come from him, was not made by him. *Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 30th 1780.*

† See Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. iii. p. 354.

"I swear to you that it never entered my head to do what you have published I did,—either to see you in a court of justice, or to become a party to my mother's suit against you. The frankness with which I dare to express my thoughts, at a moment when I no longer require the assistance of any human being, but merely to satisfy my conscience, must convince you of the truth of my assertion."

Again we have evidence to confirm this assertion, and it lies in the very testimony of his detractors—that is to say, his father and his uncle. But to avoid the inconvenience of forestalling our own narrative, as well as that of repetitions, we shall place this evidence in Book XIV, in which we purpose giving an account of the different works written by Mirabeau from 1772 to 1783.

Mirabeau took up his temporary abode at Boucher's, having yet been unsuccessful in obtaining leave to return to his paternal dwelling, or even to see his father.

"You ask me if I see him? No, doubtless. I reply to him only under dictation and through the medium of Garçon *. I shall allow him to see me very soon. I however found myself face to face with him, one day,

* The Marquis's Secretary, already mentioned. His patron termed him his *Fidus Achates*, and did not separate from him till death. Having lived together during forty-six years, they died within a fortnight of each other.

as I left Desjobert's*. His eye was piercing, his appearance strong and healthy. He cast down his eyes, drew on one side as far as he could, and I passed on†." The father and son had not met before during nine years!

Another and more serious matter now occupied Mirabeau's attention: this was his appeal from the judgment of the Bailliage of Pontarlier, pronounced March 10th 1777. On this matter we derive our materials from the family correspondence.

"I think I informed you that I made Honoré give up the impossible thing he had undertaken‡. But we are now entering the real labyrinth from which I alone can withdraw him: and this is the task of replacing his head upon his shoulders. So long as there was any hope of his beginning his new career by bringing his mother to terms, I declined meddling with this: first, in order not to complicate matters; and secondly, because it was too soon for me to place any dependance upon him. Nevertheless, having stopped him in the other business, I could not refuse him permission to proceed in his own way with this; and behold! the lawyers are already at work §!"

* Desjobert was the Marquis's counsel.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated January 26th 1781.

‡ A private deed of separation between the Marquis and Marchioness of Mirabeau.

§ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 21st 1781.

We shall not here repeat the unnecessary details given by Peuchet and Vitry, concerning the preliminary arrangements in this matter, and the steps necessary for obtaining a communication of the proceedings; neither shall we again repeat nor extract what Mirabeau says in his correspondence and statements concerning the illegalities contained in these proceedings,—such as the irregularity of the inquest, the tampering with witnesses, the falseness of the evidence, supposition of facts, gross partiality, and the animosity of the judges. The time is come for us to proceed straight to the results, attending always to the development of character, which is our principal object. We therefore continue to extract from the family correspondence.

“My rascal, as bold and enterprising as we, at his age, were discreet and shy, goes on pushing his point with M. de Maurepas with whom he is at play; also with the keeper of the seals, against whom he is pleading, and is driving straight towards letters of abolition—a thing very possible; for there are times and places for using a pole and leaping beyond all rules. Nevertheless, he was suddenly stopped by the interests of his accomplice, and wanted to go to cassation. I therefore thought it high time that I should come forward and place myself at the head of the business. These persons, issue of my loins, have forced me, at sixty years of age, to undergo my novitiate with Jews, spies, police-officers, placemen, *ed altra simil canaglia*;

—thus behold me, at sixty years of age, an apprentice criminalist! In truth, the honest people who, for ten years past, have followed me through every possible difficulty, say they never yet saw me shrink; but I know the weight of man's passing opinion, and must act as if it were against me, leaving myself the power of making use of Honoré in the best manner I can. He catches me upon the sharp point of his intellect; but you well know the nerve and chyle of people of his race; and I feel more each day that the intellect is only a tool, and that rectitude is in the heart. Declaring, therefore, that I place myself at the head of the business, is to declare that I will treat with the parties. But here I have two, whose interests are absolutely opposed to each other; namely, the Ruffeys, whose daughter is under sentence of condemnation, her reintegration being common to us; and her husband, a mere man-machine, but whose interests are represented by Valdahon,—this man having been introduced into the family by a lawsuit that made a noise, and out of revenge for which his father-in-law married again. This makes a complication of interests, and separate treaties, all of which must be brought to a single point. For the present the lawyers are at work dissecting the proceedings, in order to expose the flaws therein. At the same time, I am proceeding to negotiate, for I must do so in more than one way. Besides this, the two parliaments must be indeed well

disposed; for the *noblesse de robe**, insulted by the *noblesse de l'épée*, especially when of high rank, is to be feared in a case like the present †."

This appeal gave Mirabeau constant occupation. His father, always invisible to him, guided him by letter, and continued to give an account of him to his uncle.

"All is extraordinary to this man, and every thing must long remain in the regions of the imagination. What is not so is, that he appears to have always the same confidence and docility, and that he is never idle night or day, showing as much ardour for work, and activity in business, as obedience. On my part—as I know that this man, who is drawn to the right by his heart, and to the left by his head, which is always four yards from him, is made up of reflection like a

* The families of Ruffey and Monnier had charges and alliances in the parliaments of Burgundy and Franche-Comté.

† Unpublished letter, already quoted, from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 21st 1781. Such a view of the case could not but increase the Bailli's hatred to the nobles of the Robe, and he replied—

"I should fear more than all the rest the *vendetta* of the ragamuffins in gowns. This is the worst part of the business. It was as he contemplated this species of men that God exclaimed, 'Corrupta est omnis carnis.'—*Unpublished Letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 2nd 1781.*

"Therefore I have long been convinced, that if corruption disappeared from the face of the earth it would be again found in the courts of justice."—*Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 4th 1781.*

looking-glass ; as I know that his attraction, his situation, and his talents, will lead him to cut a figure in an age when words have no sound, writings no fixed character, rights no reality, and duties no authority, —when all is conducted as at Lilliput, that is to say, so far as regards dimunitiveness, but without foundation or principles ;—I endeavour to pour into him my head, my soul, my heart, and all,—the sound and available knowledge produced by a long course of study and meditation*. I think he is beginning to conceive that at sixty-six a man has a longer nose than at thirty, and that good counsel may be drawn from an elderly gentleman who never was a dupe but for his own convenience, and on that great principle, derived from a constant and fruitful reading of history, namely, that the most skilful and bustling make a hundred-and-thirty sword thrusts in water, for each effective thrust, and that all the intrigues of the Palatine, Longueville, Châtillon, Chevreuse, and Montbazon, sleep in the same grave, and effected nothing but what would have happened without them†. I think he is convinced, at present, that the true road to distinction is the most perfect honesty, and that this alone can lead to greatness. Not that, with the

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 8th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated Jan. 12th 1781.

advances he has made, the age in which he lives, his disposition, a certain fund of lightheartedness, and that terrible 'gift of familiarity,' as Gregory the Great terms it—a gift which makes him turn about great men as he would faggots of sticks—I ever dreamt of making him (*magnum opus!*) a man with the delicacy of his grandfather, his uncle, or even his father; but he is well persuaded that I must have him an honest man or nothing. With regard to the matter in hand concerning him, I could not get the cases drawn up by counsel until this week. I have full powers from the Ruffeys, who are really excellent people, and timid too, and whose confidence in and reliance upon my equity makes me quite ashamed*.

"Nevertheless, nothing yet comes to a point in Honoré's case. He has the best advantages in the world in actions, talents, disposition, and friends, to make the fortune of a *roué*; and he would go far, even now,—if far he could go in a country where nothing is far—where there are no longer any other pleasures than those of coteries—where, in one word, all is perishing†; for, thanks to the presumption of the ignorant who are duped by rogues! each day the cord that is strangling the state‡ is drawn tighter,

* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, already quoted, dated March 8th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated Feb. 7th 1781.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 13th 1781.

and fresh matches are in readiness to fire the mine now preparing under the public territory*.”

The Bailli, on the other hand, expressed himself almost in the same manner concerning his nephew.

“ Notwithstanding what may be said of the past, if Honoré will bespatter the public a little less, and be a little more methodical, the very noise he makes, not less than his nature, will render him the Corypheus of the times ; for he is a good actor, a man of intellect with almost genius, neither shy nor timid (qualities which put our noses out of joint, if our noses have been put out of joint). You may be assured that he is calculated for all the humbugs of society ; and it is this, and only this, that he is now pursuing†.”

“ You are right,” the Marquis replied ; “ he is come in full time, since the time for people of his stamp is come ; and if he had less of exuberance, and one inch less of folly, he would have made the greatest of fortunes by his very defects, a thing which no honest man can do in these times. But to keep him above water, and make him return to honesty, are the very devil, and I am at a loss how they are to be done‡”.

Mirabeau, however, employed his time well, if we are to credit Dupont’s testimony.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 10th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 7th 1781.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 11th 1781.

"I am a witness that our friend Gabriel, or Honoré, or whatever you are pleased to call him, is surcharged beyond measure with business and work. His father, whom I have had the happiness of inducing to place the greatest confidence in him, gives him opportunity as well as the right of showing himself to all those who are prejudiced against him—to all his relatives and connexions—under a favourable aspect, and as pursuing a most noble and prudent line of conduct*."

The Marquis said the same thing.

"At Versailles he behaved well and displayed great ability. I had allowed him to go thither in continuation of the character he is playing here, and to give him, according to my plan, an opportunity of doing public penance within the church, instead of spending years at the door, according to the natural form†. Meanwhile, I know, by the combined accounts of those who see him constantly, that he is no longer the man he appeared to us. He is now formed; he now contains himself, and is even imposing, in spite of his extreme vivacity, which he continues to keep under controul. Since the time I desired that he should forget every thing and become exactly like a sheet of white paper, he has turned his confinement to good

* Unpublished letter from Dupont de Nemours to Sophie, dated February 26th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated January 19th 1781.

account, having learnt English, Greek, Italian, and Spanish, and deeply studied the ancients, especially Tacitus, whose works he is translating. His mind, ever penetrating, has become correct ; and his powers of intellect are doubled since he has begun to expand. He feels himself at his ease, and pursues the right road. He has the glance of an eagle."

This is certainly a very unusual form of expression from the pen of the Marquis, whose praises, however, could not long remain unqualified.

" I spend my life," he wrote three days after, " in cramming him, by letter, with principles and with all I know ; for this man, always the same in his machinal endowments, has, by his long and solitary studies, done nothing more than increase the jumble of matters in his head, which forms a library turned topsy-turvy ; and perfect his skill in dazzling with superficiais, for he has inhaled formula of every thing, but can substantiate nothing†. I must speedily look to this, for his head is a positive furnace, and his talents and facility are so great that, of necessity, the poor devil must be withdrawn from amid snares and danger. He must have a guide ; and this guide must be either you or me. Assuredly I shall be unable to get the better

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 13th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated February 16th 1781.

of all the talents for society which he possesses, as you know, and which, morosely speaking, befit him for the office of a good-for-nothing fellow. I neither flatter myself that I can effect this, nor shall I make the attempt. I feel that it would require three times more energy than I possess; and if my failing to act was not a want of duty to my ancestors who now surround me, I should long ago have done as d'Orvilliers * did, with the reservation that I should have selected your place of residence for that of my retirement. But I cannot do this without spoiling every thing, and, in my particular sphere, yielding to the wicked an advantage to which they are not entitled†.

“La Saillanette‡, an *indefatigable deprecatrix*”, and her husband, pressed the Marquis to see his son.

“They do not cease assuring me, that it is by word of mouth this man requires me to govern and ripen him, and feed him with my principles, plans and documents; he being very sensitive, and unable to be guided except by me. I know this very well, and I also know that he believes it. But you are aware of

* An allusion to Count d'Orvilliers, who, after long and glorious services in the navy, yielded to the fatigue of his lengthened labours and to the grief arising from the loss of a beloved wife, and suddenly withdrew to his estate, whence he soon after entered the ecclesiastical school of St. Magloire.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated April 20th 1781.

‡ Madame du Saillant.

the manner of thinking of such people : something is always due to them. I am continually assured that it is by no means difficult to make him wince ; that nothing can be said to him directly without his eyes, his lips, and the heightened colour of his cheeks betraying that all within him is in rumour ; but the least show of affection makes him burst into tears, and he would jump into the fire for you. It cannot have escaped your recollection that, during his childhood, when he was only a monstrous male of his species, both physically and morally, he used to say, and even to persuade those who did not know him, that we acted injudiciously towards him, and did not go the right way to work with him. My love of peace, which perhaps partakes of indolence, has always made me dread cohabiting with this turbulent emanation from his intractable mother. His marriage with an heiress of his own choice seemed to separate us, which was an advantage to both. He afterwards ruined himself, and me too, and has not deserved well of me. Must it now become my duty, under the affliction of a strangury, which the greatest congeniality of temper can alone enable me to bear, to take such a companion ? I confess that I have great difficulty in making up my mind to it ; for it is sufficient to have been, during forty years, a martyr to perpetuation*.”

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 15th 1781.

A domestic event now intervened : the long-debated question was decided in due course of law, and, in spite of the lengthened defence of the Marquis of Mirabeau, his wife obtained a judicial separation and the full enjoyment of her property*. The Marquis thus expresses himself on the subject :

“ On receiving this intelligence, and replying ‘ So much the better, for my horses which will not have to take me to thank the judges,’ I prophesy to all, that this new order of things will become heavier each day, and kill me at last. Not only have I lost most of my witnesses, but the dearest and most intimate of those who remain are unable to judge me. I must be myself and have my own memory, and have spent the days and the nights with myself that I have done, to know whether I am treated as I deserve, at least according to our own feeble views. And as, from the hair of my head to my toe-nails, I am tied up and bound with cords at the bottom of the abyss, at the end of my long life, which has become so painful ever since I espoused discord and engendered plunder, let it suffice for you to know, that when the other judgment† was pronounced, my mind was made up, and

* By a decree of the Grand Chamber of the Parliament of Paris of the 18th May 1781.

† A judgment, dated February 14th, 1777, afterwards set aside, entirely in favour of the Marchioness, with regard to very considerable claims which she had set up.

no one knew it. I negotiated the whole through Nicolai*, who is dead. All my family were armed against me except the only sound member†, who was in good hands. I intended leaving my power of attorney with Du Saillant, and with an annuity of 3000 livres, withdrawing to Tuscany; and I had the Grand Duke's word that none of my children should be allowed to enter his dominions, except with my own consent. But now I have obtained Honoré's release; and I have duties to perform towards him, for he is in want of me. On the day this judgment was delivered, I received marks of friendship which cheered up my heart a little‡." That girl, Du Sail-

* The Abbé Nicolai was the chargé d'affaires, at Paris, of Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany. The Abbé died in 1780. On that occasion the Marquis of Mirabeau wrote—

"He was an excellent man; and as he was indefatigable in doing good, he would have done much more had he lived. He was a sort of mortar among nations, a diplomatic *pozzolana*, which neither the sun nor the frost could scale."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated October 24th 1780.*

† Madame du Saillant.

‡ Sophie, in her solitude, took great interest in this event.

"The situation," she wrote to Mirabeau, "in which you describe your father to be, affects me most powerfully. He was already so interesting to me. The day on which he yields, and receives you back into favour, will render him still dearer to me."—*Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated May 24th 1781.*

Whatever, at a later period, were the feelings, rather suggested than spontaneous, of the Countess of Mirabeau, she was deeply

lant, who had the rage of bringing home her brother, bestirred herself and entreated, and turned and twisted me in every way. It was urged, that as the hostile cabal had spread a report that the success of my law-suit was to be the signal of my son's return to my house, this was the time to prove the contrary; and besides, I could no longer leave my son in the streets, or in the house of another person, as that would quite prevent him, &c. I merely replied, that the circumstance did not bind me to do anything extraordinary. Boucher, at whose house you know he lives, came with

afflicted at this event, of which she speaks in a manner that induces us to notice it here, more especially as it is the proposition of some future developments in our work.

"I cannot tell you how much I am grieved. I dare not express to my father all that I feel. My uncle (the Bailli) mentioned it to me with tears in his eyes, and you may imagine how much this affected me, and truly it would have melted a rock; I would willingly have accompanied him to Bignon; for you must know better than any body else, that I have always evidently wished to be again in the midst of a family from whom I have received so much kindness. But I represented, that in my present situation with M. de Mirabeau, it was impossible for me to go to his father's house, at the risk of meeting him there, or with the sad necessity of excluding him from it, and depriving all his family of seeing him. Notwithstanding all this, I mentioned the matter to my father, who, though much attached to my father-in-law, and greatly regretting the misfortune that has befallen us, was not of opinion that I should go to Bignon. This is sufficiently telling you that I am unable to follow my inclination, having no other rule of conduct than my father's will."—*Unpublished letter from the Countess of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated June 5th 1781.*

the others. He is a man well broken in to harness, being cold and prudent. After dinner, he began to entreat me. On a sudden his chest began to swell, his eyes to fill with tears, and he said to me with sobs : ‘ Whatever prejudices, Sir, you may entertain against my profession, I am a man prone to good—the proof of this is, that I am very poor. Well, sir ! I offer myself as a security for your son. You shall be satisfied with him ; and if ever I have deserved any thing from you . . . ’ He could say no more, but rose and rushed to the drawing-room door. He was agitated to suffocation. I followed, and having embraced him, assured him that, though my plans had been very different, he should present my son to me. The emotion of such a man, who is indeed poor*, though powerful in his class, really affected me, and I spoke in such a strain, that the ensuing evening, after having given notice to the Chevalier Scépeaux, whose Bayard bosom has much of my affection, and has great influence over me, Boucher and the family suddenly

* Among a thousand proofs of this fact, we offer to our readers only one, which is contained in the following passage from a letter written by Mirabeau to his sister.

“ I knew, I know still, and I see with my own eyes, that this Boucher, who has a ridiculously small salary for so confidential an office, this man who has uncommon talents, tried and acknowledged integrity, is but in indifferent circumstances, though holding an appointment which, in the hands of certain individuals, would be an inexhaustible mine of wealth.”—*Unpublished letter, dated December 19th 1780.*

brought me Honoré, and whilst he was at my feet, the chevalier embraced me saying: ‘He is the prodigal son!’ I told Honoré, as I gave him my hand, that having long since pardoned an enemy, I offered my hand to a friend, and that I hoped some day to be able to bless a son. By such means he is now in the house. I found him grown much stouter, particularly about the shoulders, neck, and head. He has our own form, construction, and gait, save and except his quicksilver attributes. His hair is very beautiful, his forehead is very open, and so are his eyes. His accent is much less studied now than it was formerly, though it is a little so still. His appearance is natural and unaffected, and his complexion is not of so high a colour as it used to be. In every other respect, he is just the same as when you last saw him*.

“You have no idea of the effect of the scene of last Tuesday upon poor Dupont, who is still in grief†,

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 22nd 1781.

† Dupont had just lost, March 20th 1781, his friend and benefactor, the virtuous Turgot.

From Turgot’s connexion with some of the Economists, his elevation to the ministry in August 1774 must have given satisfaction and hope to the Marquis of Mirabeau, who, in his letters of that period, speaks warmly on the subject. Subsequently, with reference to the mutiny of May 1775, the cause or pretence of which was, the high price of corn, the Marquis of Mirabeau wrote:—

“As for Turgot, his courage is indomitable, but he is good by himself. The King also shows himself,—this we must in justice

whom no exhortation could console, and who, on this occasion, forgot his own sorrows, threw to the wind

admit. He mildly said that it was not thus he must be addressed, and that nothing could be obtained from him through fear. He has written thus to Turgot: 'I did not go out, not because I was afraid,—for I know not what fear is, and I shall, I think, be in no hurry to learn it,—but because there are so few persons who wish for order, that they must not be lost sight of.'—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 3rd 1775.*

The Marquis afterwards wrote:—

“We have in favour of good only the King and Turgot, but both are firm.”

The unhappy monarch spoke in the same sense a short time before he allowed his minister to be taken from him by court intrigue. “There are only Turgot and myself,” said he, “who love the people.”

“Yet,” adds the Marquis of Mirabeau, “although active and invincible in opposition, Turgot and his master are weak and unskilful against court cunning, insinuations, and well-timed entreaty; and I think that Turgot will not go far, but he will retire covered with glory. I wish the King had the courage to practise his virtues.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 9th 1775.*

Let us add a passage from one of the Bailli's replies:

“Nothing surprises me but the atrocity or stupidity of those who dare to teach the populace the secret of their strength. I know not whence people derive their confidence that the public ferment will be stopped. If I am not deceived, such mutinies have already preceded revolution.”—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated May 25th 1775.*

At a subsequent period, the chief of the Economists disowned Turgot.

“Be assured,” he wrote, “that I do not see, and have not seen, either Turgot, D'Albert (lieutenant of police), or even Dupont. The proud knaves who surround the former attack none so strongly as they do the Economists, and people are beginning to say that we

the burning agony of his own grief, — in which, perhaps, there was a little of the smoke of disappointed

are enemies. This is all I wished, and nothing annoyed me so much as the connexion said to exist between us.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 29th 1775.*

At a still later period the Marquis passed a judgment upon Turgot, which, always excepting the harsh and cutting terms in which it is expressed, is not wholly contradicted by history. This, whilst it does justice to his talents, virtue, and patriotism, imputes to him inexperience, precipitancy, and a want of knowledge of mankind.

“It is said,” writes the Marquis, “that Messrs. Turgot and Malesherbes are going to Italy. In this case you will see two men with good hearts and crooked understandings; and I know of nothing more unfit for governing than those two qualities.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated August 31st 1776.*

“You have rightly judged Turgot, in times past and present. His is a cracked head, and philosophical after the fashion of those gentlemen whose political systems were to confound every other. As to his plan of public revenue, he is not the inventor of it. But his premature mode of announcing it, his ideal and awkward mode of adopting it, and his obstinate and disdainful manner of carrying it into effect, would have thrown him back a whole century, if it were possible. A man in office must possess either natural dignity and a correct judgment, or else an infinity of talent. He had nothing of the kind, being only a virtuous dreamer, and, when he acted, a true breaker of necks.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 29th 1778.*

To these notes we add some observations on Turgot, written about the same period by Mirabeau, who admired that minister without fanaticism, exposing his faults whilst he justly praised his virtues, his arguments, and his patriotic intentions.

The following quotation is taken from the “*Mémoires du Ministère du Duc d’Aguillon*,” by the Abbé Soulavie, who composed these memoirs, as we shall show in Book XIV of the present work, by

ambition—to become one of us, and think of nothing but our concerns*.”

employing and working up reflections, notes and extracts of which Mirabeau wrote the greater portion in the donjon of Vincennes.

“In 1775, systems awkwardly conducted, and insidiously thwarted, led to some popular disturbances. M. Turgot, whose views contain some sublime things, but who is acquainted with man only through the medium of books, comes too bluntly to the point on all occasions, and, in spite of the age he lives in, and the character of his nation, would fain be the Cato of France. He wanted to reform a monarchy incapable of reform by any known means, and straighten by main force an old uprooted tree. M. Turgot gives lessons to the young King, without perceiving that instead of lessons he ought to give him firmness and a will *to will*. The King desires the good of his nation; placed in the centre of corruption and disorder, he will lament their existence, but the fear of acting wrongly will render him inactive. Lastly, and I must say all, I think that M. Turgot, philosopher though he be, is somewhat of an enthusiast, and does not see all that surrounds him. He is like a man placed upon the lantern of the dome of the Invalides, who does not perceive the ant-hill swarming beneath his feet. From such a height he trumpets forth most excellent views, and principles, and systems; but where are the means of putting them in practice? When a house is pulled down, there must be a place to deposit the materials until they are required in the rebuilding. In a great state like this, which is very old, and full of abuses, three things are requisite: to obtain a perfect knowledge of its present condition, to observe existing data, and to agree and pursue the best means for quitting the one and gaining the other. I certainly find genius in the articles of the Encyclopædia, entitled ‘Existence,’ ‘Etymology,’ and ‘Expansibility.’ M. Turgot is the author of them. They are well written, and full of matter, but not of such matter as is required in the government of an empire. In the present state of

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 28th 1781.

The Marquis was induced, by the loss of his law-suit, to modify his plans, so long and unhappily pursued, of paternal and domestic government.

“I have told my children, and especially my son, who shows, in his way, a great inclination to be docile, that all has turned out ill according to and against my cogitations—that providence has shown me that it has not set its seal upon the consummation of my long and rough labours—that I have worked out my time, and proved sufficiently, at my risk and peril, and fortune and humiliation, that dishonour and evil conduct in my own family, are not at all to my taste; that I am a witness for myself to having fulfilled my duties towards my family and towards society—that I do not feel myself more crushed by the curse upon me, than I was before puffed out by infatuation; but that, henceforth, remembering the powerful Homer, who reduced old age to the only part it is able to play, to prating, the precursor of dotage, and at most to giving advice, I have begun a new, but quiet and passive existence, regretting even my inability to resign my house, my person, and my maintenance—that I shall appear ostensibly to support my children, when it is absolutely necessary, and secretly to give them advice whenever they really think me fit to do so—remembering nevertheless that as they have reached years of discretion,

affairs, therefore, M. Turgot will never be a great minister, nor will he ever long remain a minister.”—Page 185.

it is for themselves to conduct their own affairs, and for my son to reset his head, and re-sew himself together piece by piece—that, lastly the sound members of my family will always be acknowledged by me, and the remainder vomited forth and forgotten *.”

The discouragement of the Marquis now went to such length, that he had made up his mind to comply with his brother's wishes, and withdraw into Provence.

“ Doubt not that my first and strongest inclination was to quit this Paris, where time is swallowed like so much fog, without turning it to account or even perceiving it, and leave everything there to go to you. But, to pretend to rest, is to build in the air. Moreover, as a man of sense should fear sudden resolutions, I thought that, being unable to bring Honoré, I should be leaving him in the streets; and I was content to search for no other reason, although my taste for fondling him is by no means extreme, notwithstanding I am continually stimulated to do so by that little witch Du Saillant †.”

A short time after Mirabeau returned to his father's house, he accompanied the Marquis to the estate of Bignon, where the latter always spent some time every year. Here they remained together eight months. During this interval there are few facts worthy of

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 26th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 29th 1781.

recording; but we must not omit to mention a family fête, of which we have an exact account written by Mirabeau, who composed, for the occasion, both the words and music of an interlude, a work deserving of praise only with reference to the intention*.

We could likewise give the particulars of a project of his, dictated by filial respect, to consecrate, by a rustic monument, the recollection of his father's philanthropic works. As this project is mentioned in all its

* Besides this interlude, we have a number of pieces of poetry written by Mirabeau, who however candidly says: "The truth is, I have never written any poetry worth notice."—*Original Letters from Vincennes*. Vol ii. p. 423. Nothing that we possess disproves this assertion. The Marquis of Mirabeau had a taste for poetry, and applied himself to it more than his son did. At an early age, being carried away by the natural confidence of youth, he tried his unfledged pinions in a didactic poem, which he soon after abandoned.

"I have written the 'Battle of Cassano,' [in which his father was so dangerously wounded] as an episode in the first canto, of 'The Art of War,' a poem composed by me at a period when poetry was my trade, and the only one I was allowed to follow."—*Domestic Memoirs of the Marquis of Mirabeau*.

He however continued to write poetry all his life, but his subjects were of mere temporary interest. We have, for instance, a tolerably good imitation, written by him, of Catullus's epithalamium of Thetis and Pelens, which imitation was composed on the occasion of the marriage of the Count of Gisors and Madlle. de Nivernois. We are of opinion that a more assiduous cultivation of poetry would have rendered the Marquis of Mirabeau a poet of no mean order, and the reader will not be surprised at this assertion, when the present work has enabled him to appreciate the Marquis's writings, hitherto quite unknown, which are remarkable for an abundance, a boldness, and an energy of metaphor often worthy of the most lofty poetical language.

particulars by Peuchet * and Vitry †, we shall not enter into the subject, because we wish to confine ourselves to facts that are really interesting and characteristic ‡.

Mirabeau, though restored to his family, had still long and severe trials to undergo; and the reader may form some notion of them from the correspondence published in 1806 §, with more zeal than judgment, by I. F. Vitry, a friend of Mirabeau's—a correspondence real and authentic, but garbled. We possess the originals of these letters, the unpublished portion of which, together with the remainder of our materials also unpublished, will serve us to continue our portrait of Mirabeau, painting him with his own colours as well as with those supplied by persons who had the best opportunities of observing and knowing him well.

Reasons which we shall explain further on, now

* Vol. ii. pp. 9, 13, 14, 15, *et seq.*

† Unpublished letters, &c., pp. 16, 32, 43.

‡ A few days after his arrival at Bignon, Mirabeau, as he was shooting, was rather badly wounded by the awkwardness of a servant. A letter written to Vitry, dated September 9th 1781, makes us acquainted with this accident. This is what Mirabeau says of it.

“Like another Louis XIV, I threw my gun upon the ground, for fear I should regale him with the contents. The poor devil, who is much attached to me, is sufficiently punished for his thoughtlessness, by the fear he experienced when he saw my blood flow.”

This servant, on the 2nd of April 1791, was still in Mirabeau's service, and his master left him, by his will, 8000 francs.

§ One volume 8vo, Paris, Le Normand, 1806.

induced the Marquis of Mirabeau to make a favourable impression upon the Bailli with regard to his nephew.

“ Give no credence to the reports which people are pleased to spread against him ; believe nothing but what I tell you, for I know that ill-natured things have already been said. There are individuals interested in destroying him *, and they would fain make the wolf so monstrous, that his ears are camels’ tails. But I will let you know every thing : this is doing justice, and it is also my duty. Though he so greatly resembles his mother, he has not her tormenting spirit, nor her domestic violence and turbulence ; though an immoderate talker, he detests scandal ; neither has he a vulgar appearance, nor is he given to intemperance ; he has no taste for play, which he abhors, as he also does idleness, being fond of work and books. As a set-off against these good qualities, he is always out at the elbows, and there is innate want of order in him ; he is credulous as a nurse, indiscreet, a liar by exaggeration, affirmation, and impudence, without necessity, for the mere sake of story-telling ; and he has a confidence in himself which on every subject throws dust into the eyes of others, setting it off, as he does, with infinite talent and powers of mind †. However, vice

* The collateral branch of the Countess of Mirabeau’s family.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 26th 1781.

in him has taken much less root than virtue. He is all facility, fire, incapacity, weakness (not laziness), uncertainty of disposition, a mind cogitating in the indefinite, and building with soap bubbles*. Now, brother of mine, we have him as he is. I pass over myself, for if I had you not, I should be but a poor, prostrate old man. Whilst we yet last, we must assist him, if he shows constant good-will, rather than suffer him to dangle from some tree that may find him heavy †.

“I have yet no reason to draw back. Honoré appears wholly occupied in playing the tame duck, and saving me trouble. It is very strange! Disposed as he is to decide dogmatically upon all matters, and to stun every one with his knowledge, he confesses that he is nothing compared to his father. The truth is, that it is difficult to have greater talent than he has for acceleration and deduction ‡.”

The Bailli, a very enlightened man, from the observations which a long and meditative practical philosophy § had enabled him to make, drew a natural conclusion from these particulars.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 22nd 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated July 18th 1781.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 16th 1781.

§ This philosophy may be detected in the original *sallies* con-

"So, thanks to your posteromania, you are now engaged in playing the pedagogue over a chicken of

tained in two letters, one written about this period, the other ten years previously.

"I have only a carcass naturally strong, but which I have so often risked upon a toss up of heads or tails, that it is beginning to decay. I have now dreamed away two-thirds of the dream of life; and, with the exception of mass, which I have not yet performed, I have done a little of every thing; and have at length perceived, like the late Mr. Solomon, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. With regard to the latter, I have always felt, and still feel it, for you and yours; but I have kept scarcely any for my own use,—I who laughed as dexterously at the bows made to me when governor of Guadeloupe, and to my Excellency the Captain-general of the fleets and squadrons of St. John of Jerusalem, as at those which I returned to keep the persons company who made them to me, and also at those which I saw made by the great of the earth, all of whose greatness was not in their hearts and heads."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 3rd 1781.*

"Believe me, John Anthony saw sufficient, and lived long enough in your infamous Sodom, to have acquired the experience of a Parisian. Then John Anthony has carried his long person, and his face sometimes grave, sometimes humourous, often silly, into the four quarters of the world. He has looked everywhere; as the Italian hath it, '*Tutto il mondo è casa nostra.*' Further, John Anthony, formerly with light hair, then chestnut, and lastly gray, and formerly in pecuniary difficulties, got into easy circumstances. Thus, John Anthony, who sat upon the judgment seat, embroidered with fleurs-de-lys,—who governed, obeyed, commanded, did battle by land and by sea, was the chief of one senate, and member of another, would ultimately, if he had not rendered his outward man of a tolerably irregular form, and become lame, have entered holy orders, in order to say mass, and thus exclaim with Solomon, that he had seen every thing, and that all was vanity and vexation of spirit. Is not this a fine period?"—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 15th 1771.*

thirty-two years old! Are you silly enough to believe that you will make him other than he is *? You have undertaken a puzzling task, in endeavouring to round off a disposition which is like a hedge-hog, all in points, with very little body †. Take heed, moreover, that the very way to succeed in nothing is to attempt to think for others, and lead them according to your taste, and not theirs ‡. If, when your son is thirty-three years old, you cannot let him take his own range, after the punishments he has undergone, you are attempting to dry up the river after the fashion of the Danaïdes §."

These sarcasms were not left without a reply.

"I admit that this man, who has an ardent and perspicuous mind, and is almost unequalled in talent, but made up of wadding as regards his disposition, has no judgment, and that his heart, which is good, is attached to nothing. And I hold that, in lieu of a soul, he has only a mirror, in which all is reflected and immediately effaced, for nothing is realised. You will say that this is a pleading to justify my new

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated July 6th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated July June 13th 1781.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated August 3rd 1781.

§ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated September 4th 1781.

mode of enacting the schoolmaster with an adult. But he is no more thirty-three than I am sixty-six ; and it is not more rare to see a man of my age, although grown grey by disappointment, tire out both the legs and the heads of young men, by eight hours of walking, or the same period of closet work, than to see a bloated tun of a fellow, pock-marked, and with an old look, say *papa*, and not know how to behave. You are too equitable not to admit that a son cannot be amputated like an arm : if this could be done, I should long since have strutted about with one arm ; but as it cannot, when my son comes to me, I am not free to cast him into the street,—when he listens, I am bound, in honour and conscience, to talk to him with a view of making him, from a good swimmer that he is, become a diver—when he behaves well and obeys, it is my duty to lead him—if he is in debt, the aim of my conduct should be to free him therefrom ; and if he has a wife, to lead him to her, and make him win back her regard by inducing her to bite at his hook, as she did on a former occasion. All this is not matter of choice and will, but of duty*.”

The marquis continued to give a favourable account of his son, whom he judged in his own way.

“ First, set down as a fact that this man is nothing,

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated July 21st 1781.

absolutely nothing. He has the devil's own wit, but it is always placed like the eyes of a hare. He has taste, quackery, and the appearance of knowledge; he has action, turbulence, and daring; he is a bird that teaches others to sing, and sometimes evinces dignity; finally, he is neither harsh nor overbearing in command. Now, all this serves only to show him as forgetful of the day before, and careless of the morrow,—as yielding to the impulses of the moment. He is a child-parrot, an abortive man, acquainted with neither the possible nor the impossible, with neither uneasiness nor convenience, pleasure nor pain, action nor repose—and who yields the moment things resist*. I have scarcely any further occasion to quarrel with him about the lies which at one time constituted the liver and the spleen, and the unconquerable temperament of his body. He sometimes draws up suddenly when in full speed towards exaggeration. He is likewise sick of his scattered knowledge, which has become tiresome to him ever since he has pursued something more positive. I do not let drop a word but he picks it up and brings it to me again; in short, he is a magpie and a jay by instinct†. Nevertheless, I doubt he is escaping from me, and I think he may be made an

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 5th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated October 17th 1781.

excellent tool if he is taken hold of by the handle of vanity. I should think it certain also, that he would not escape from you either, provided you never scolded him, for he is a timid child—but attacked him through his self-love, telling him to his face very strong truths, but in the form of ratiocination *. The more I see of him the more I have reason to repeat that he is a good sort of fellow, who sticks to every thing, and will always be a little crack-brained, but for whom any narrow sphere will suffice, provided it does not widen †.

“ I do not spare him my morning ratiocinations upon his follies, either in tone or argument, of the day before. He seizes my well-supported moral, and my lessons, which have always a living interest, because they revolve upon a real pivot, that of knowing, no doubt, that a man does not change his nature, but that his reason serves to conceal his weak side, and to guard it well, so that he may avoid being boarded on that side ‡.

“ I must tell you that Honoré visibly improves. I may say, that when I took him in hand, he was madder

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 3rd 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated September 17th 1781.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated September 30th 1781.

than in former times. People shudder at the thoughts of my taking him with me, especially as my children remain behind *. When I look before me, I see perhaps, as far as any body else ; and yet, notwithstanding his horrible ugliness, his irregular gait, his peremptory precipitation, his swollen and bloated person, and his atrocious look, or rather frown, when he listens and reflects, something tells me that he is not more dangerous than a stuffed image to frighten away birds ; that the sternness with which he has contrived to surround his person, his reputation, and his mighty deeds, is nothing but smoke ; and that, at bottom, there is no man in the kingdom less capable than himself of committing a premeditated act of wickedness †.”

These explanations, however, did not convince the Bailli ; he had long since been put upon his guard by the author of them, whose altered tone was not calculated to convert him very suddenly.

“ I confess to you that the portraits of him which you now paint, are far from satisfactory to me ; for, to tell you the truth, he was to have come to you from Vincennes quite corrected by reflection, and you describe him to me in reality, as a person who, feeling

* M. and Madame du Saillant were then on their estate in Limousin.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 3rd 1781.

that he requires your assistance to seat him in his saddle, submits to all that he thinks agreeable to you *. I know, moreover (for at my age one has half of the devil's advantages for becoming a conjuror), that men of a certain stamp are able for a time to display the tiger's paw without claws; and he himself, when he was at Mirabeau with me, was like a handsome girl if I but frowned. But my nerves are not covered with velvet, like yours, and I am no longer of an age or taste to take the impossible by the collar, at the cost of my quiet—perhaps of my life—and the less so, because I have never any chance, nothing in my favour having ever succeeded,—for during my life I have encountered only agitations and hurricanes †. I have no desire therefore to tempt the devil, who has always meddled with my concerns ever since I was born, and will probably continue to do so whilst I remain in this world, on condition, I trust, that he shall not meddle with them in the next, in which I firmly believe ‡; for I have persisted in fixing the immortality of the soul in my head, in spite of the enormous quantity of vegetables which I have seen in carriages at Paris and in other great cities §.”

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 15th 1781

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated November 10th 1781.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated November 15th 1781.

§ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 21st, 1769.

The Marquis continued to write his remarks, from which we are not sparing of our extracts, because they are expressed in a very original manner, and because, among numerous errors of prevention and of system, the letters now before us contain many very just and truly characteristic observations.

“ I often return to this man ; but it is for our advantage that I should do so, as he is the successor destined to transmit our ancestors to future ages. This man has nothing in the world belonging to himself but a will, which is incredible in one displaying so much talent, taste, intellect, and facility whenever he takes pen in hand. He has not a single idea of his own. Like the Malabars, he is very ingenious in invention, but quite a nullity in ideas. All with him is either borrowed or a reminiscence, which he makes his thing and his flesh. In this he would be like us all, who never had innate ideas, if he had any body ; but he is a mere shadow. This distinction, which experience has at length made me discover, explains to me a multitude of things and effects. The world is full of mere shadows which take each other for real bodies ; but no shadow was ever so much of a shadow as this one. He has no passion ; he is voracious and unequal, but is neither a glutton nor at all fond of wine. As for women, faith it was pure exuberance and talk. Being hideously ugly, at this trade impudence and boldness are sure weapons, and these are the ones he used. As for being difficult to live with,

and possessing that backbiting, uneasy and hostile temper imputed to him, he is at bottom gay, easy, good-natured, and affable, but neither tender, nor gallant, nor effeminate, nor voluptuous*.”

“ I can only confirm what I have said to you for some time past concerning Honoré. That head of his will always be a child’s head—it is so by nature ; and as he naturally puts himself at his ease, his having a Mentor does not at all weigh upon him. Besides, his is a head of execution and resource ; he is also the best creature in the world except when in bad company, from which may God preserve him ; and races have been begotten by ten thousand weaker and madder, and not provided with near so much intellect and good will†. Honoré will doubtless never be cured of his radical vices, his heat of blood joined to a facility that becomes a weakness, and to a natural and short-

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 16th, 1781. It appears to us piquant to place by the side of this portrait, or rather caricature, what Mirabeau said of himself three months after.

“ Gentle reader ! you who, without being either Valdabon or Mirabeau, take an interest in the latter, because bars, bolts and locks are affecting prefaces, and because he appears to you more gay than mischievous, more mischievous than wicked, an impatient, fiery and irascible animal, but tender, affectionate, and an excellent man at bottom, do not you stamp with your feet,” &c. *Second case for counsel’s opinion in the matter of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier.* 8vo. Edition, p. 141.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 21st, 1781.

sighted presumption which mistakes a bog for solid ground. This, and he admits it, makes of him a man who will long require an easy and friendly guide, and an agent in experience, in order to ripen his mind. Both come at the pace of a tortoise ; but he has much talent and good will, and is well cut out for work *."

" I cannot say any thing but good of his arrangements and conduct, and of the surprising alteration which a residence of seven or eight months with me has produced in his conduct and ideas, without changing his natural manner, or generating affectation. He acknowledges, and with good reason, that the intellect and talent he employed in committing his follies are surprising ; he admits this like all the rest, for he is the greatest confessor of faults in the universe, with this difference, that it is not like the inmates of Bicêtre,, with a tone of compunction, but with an air of reflection like that with which the Bishop of Grenoble spoke of the Abbé le Camus †. It is impossible to possess greater intelligence and facility. With every attribute, or nearly so, of the sky-rocket, he is a thunderbolt of labour and expedition. Example,

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 9th, 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated January 7th, 1782. Stephen le Camus, Bishop of Grenoble, afterwards Cardinal, who by a long penance, a public confession, austerities, and the practice of great virtues, atoned for some juvenile errors. He was born in 1632, and died in 1707.

knowledge, and superiority correct him of themselves ; but he has an immense want of being governed—and he feels it too. He knows that he owes his return to you ; he knows that you have always been pilot and compass to me, and that you must be the same to him—and he puts his vanity in his uncle *.”

“ I tell you he is a rare subject for the future. You have all the Saturn necessary for his Mercury. But if once you hold him, do not let him go :—should he even perform miracles, keep you hold of him, and pull him by the sleeve—for the poor devil requires it. If you act as a father to him, he will satisfy you ; but if you act only as an uncle, he is a lost man†. Love this young man thus *unbrambled* against hope. You are *omni spes et fortuna nostri nominis*, as Hannibal said to his brother. Probe his heart, and raise his head. Let him know that under your long and cold features dwells the best man that ever lived—one made of the filings of angels. Make him love you, and he will become a great man ; it is you who will strike him with the thunder of St. Paul‡.”

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 3rd, 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated Februrary 5th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated January 28th 1782.

At this period Mirabeau was deeply afflicted at the loss of his very dear friend, Boucher, the "good angel" of the donjon of Vincennes. Peuchet, a biographer, who from an inexplicable caprice, constantly accuses Mirabeau without the least cause, after having just before excused him without reason, and sometimes praised him injudiciously, inveighs bitterly against the pretended ingratitude which the liberated prisoner evinced towards the man who had consoled and served him during his captivity.

"The reader," says he *, "*will not learn without anger*, that from the very period of Mirabeau's return to society, he spoke of M. Boucher *almost with contempt*—of that M. Boucher who dried his tears, procured consolation for Sophie, and endangered his responsibility to serve them both—of that man, in short, whom both he and Sophie surnamed *the good angel*, in consequence of the good he did them."

Let us now examine how Peuchet founds this imputation, with reference to the friend whose praises by Mirabeau the reader has already seen.

As poor after his deliverance as before, because the allowance made him by his father was an absolute mockery, Mirabeau was obliged to dispose of his manuscripts to raise money for his most pressing wants †. Unable by Boucher's means to dispose of

* Vol. ii. p. 7.

† He had long anticipated the state of pecuniary distress in

some of them, he wrote to Vitry in the following terms, if we are to believe Peuchet.

“Boucher is finessing with you, but his office has given him a habit of doing this. You, from natural disposition and rectitude of mind, pursue a straight line, which, in matters of business, as in geometry, is the shortest; and by so doing, you would put out a great many others.”—*Letter from Mirabeau to Vitry, dated June 28th 1781.*

This then is the passage transcribed by Peuchet, in support of his accusation; but to give it greater force, in his inexplicable bitterness, he suppresses one part of the sentence, containing these words: “Boucher is a good and honest man;” for we have the original letter before us, and it may also be found in Vitry’s book *. Why, then, did Peuchet garble this extract? For no other purpose than to give himself the satis-

which his father always kept him. Two years previously he spoke of it in the following terms:—

“I entreat you, my dear angel, not to neglect my views on your bookseller, from thinking my difficulties at an end. My captivity is about to terminate, it is true, but not my distress. I expect that my father will show the most extreme parsimony. Now Sophie is in want, and in debt? Where shall we find means to meet these things if I do not work.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated September 28th 1780.*

We confine ourselves to the above extract, as we purpose explaining, in another place, the steps which Mirabeau assiduously took to avoid the pecuniary difficulties which he anticipated.

* Page 4, lines 1 and 2.

faction of asserting that Mirabeau spoke of his benefactor "in cold and contemptuous language *."

Nothing more is necessary to enable the reader fully to appreciate, on this new occasion, the impartiality shown by Peuchet, than a sentence written by Mirabeau to a third person, concerning an insignificant difficulty in mere form raised by Boucher, whose prudence often, a little too minute, excited at times Mirabeau's natural hastiness of temper. But what could reasonably be inferred from this trifling circumstance against Mirabeau's attachment to Boucher? We may fairly judge of this attachment by passages already quoted, as well as by the following affecting declaration, and the extracts which succeed.

" You said something the other day to Fontelliau that surprises me. Can you really believe that I am angry with you, from whom I have received nothing but services and acts of kindness? My excellent friend!—were you to inflict a death-wound upon me, I would yet try to embrace you before I died; and

* If, while blaming the bad faith of Peuchet, the reader should, however, think that there is any coldness in Mirabeau's letter, let him bear in mind, that the man to whom it was written, and of whose assistance Mirabeau stood then greatly in need, had had a quarrel with Boucher. Here is a proof it:—

" At bottom, Boucher, as you know, is too good and too well bred to have intended to affront you. His mind has been excited and confused by the chattering of women—that is all."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Vitry, dated July 11th 1781.*

my last words should be those of affection and gratitude *."

" I bless my fate, cruel as it was for so long a period, that it has given me such a friend as you, whom I do not find that I have paid too dearly for by my shipwreck †."

" I am thunderstruck at hearing of poor Boucher's death. You are, no doubt, aware of this deplorable event. Oh! my dear sister, what a destiny for a man so virtuous and so noble, in a condition of life so much beneath him! Obtain information respecting the fate of his family. Entreat my father to attend to their wants. Were I free, I would hasten to mingle my tears with those of his widow. Had I any thing of my own I would lay it all at her feet ‡."

Having stopped our narrative for a moment to discuss this episodic question, which appeared of sufficient interest to justify the notice we have taken of it, we return to the letters of the Marquis of Mirabeau.

" I can answer for the good will, and more than

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated August 8th 1779.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated December 10th 1780.

‡ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated March 3rd 1782. Mirabeau was then a prisoner, having, on the 12th of February previous, given himself up at the gaol of Pontarlier, in order to appeal from the judgment passed on him in his absence. He was not liberated till the 14th of August following.

good will, of your nephew, who, nevertheless, is a chicken that will never have any head; a merry-andrew, who proceeds along sometimes by sliding, sometimes by jumps, and a plunderer, who will never show good faith—these three things are in his nature. His erudition consists of stolen passages from journals, and affirmation. He thinks he knows all languages, whilst he is a mere grammaticaster in his own. In a word, he knows nothing, and can do nothing as the handle of a tool, but all as the tool itself; for when he has stolen a thought from you, he has so much confidence and audacity, that he will immediately sound it forth in rounded periods, were the thought even the smallest possible—this is mere instinct—but then he makes it succeed, and executes it. He has not even our memory. I have told him all this; but even with such drawbacks, he will delight you at times by the truth and power of his arguments*. With this, again—for all in him is contrast, though he is often but a poplar leaf—I know of no man more a master than he is on certain occasions. Reconcile this. I have told him a hundred times that he was no better than a coloured shadow. I hold the same opinion of many others, but of none so strongly as of him. He is not ill-tempered nor evil-disposed—on the contrary, he is a good kind of creature; but what brains!—if

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 6th 1782.

brains they be,—they are the weakest in Europe*. Thus, brother of mine, if this disjointed being can ever be sewn together again, it can be done only by you ; and as he is to be cut out afresh, I cannot get a better pattern to do it by than yourself. Moreover, he is neither a father, nor an uncle, and he will respect you more than he does any body else. You must be kind and firm with him ; you will thereby become his saviour, and make him your masterpiece of workmanship ; and the more so, because he greatly loves good at present, and will plunder you of your principles and your virtue, for he has an infinity of wit, which is sharp as the sting of a hornet, God knows ! He will even amuse you ; but cut him short when he is bouncing—tell him that *notice*, *certainty*, and *truth* have never formed a trinity, and that you love nothing but truth †."

We here perceive a father, long irritated against his son, speaking of him with some affection, praising for the first time certain points of his character, announcing his coming regeneration, and founding his hope of it not only upon his paternal care, but upon the inspiration and advice of an uncle, whose family pride it was necessary to rouse, as well as his self-love. In manœuvring

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 3rd 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated December 17th 1781.

thus, the Marquis, more skilful than sincere, had a motive, which we will explain.

Mirabeau's return to his family, after an absence, or rather an exile, of ten years' duration, gave him, not the social condition which he had so long lost, but the means of recovering it. This, however, he could not effect until he had brought to a termination — a successful one, if possible—two matters equally delicate and difficult. One was to obtain a revision of the sentence pronounced against him at Pontarlier during his absence, and the other, to induce the Countess of Mirabeau to return to him. This lady had lived in separation from him ever since 1775 ; but in 1779 she obtained a judicial separation of property, and returned to the house of her father, the Marquis of Marignane. On the first appearance of her husband after his release from prison, she declared that she would sue for a judicial separation from bed and board.

To complete Mirabeau's regeneration, it was necessary that these two points should be settled. But as both could not be brought about at the same time, it was necessary to pursue one first in preference to the other. The choice was a matter of great embarrassment.

The principal object of the family was, as we have already stated, to perpetuate the name ; hence, the Marquis was anxious that the reconciliation between the husband and wife should be brought about before the sentence was appealed from by the former.

“Seeing and foreseeing the length of the criminal proceedings, I often feel a wish to direct Honoré towards the reconciliation, as being an object he can attain, and which would lead him to the other, and thereby begin his new existence. But the devil himself could not persuade him; and as he gets warm in favour of the mad woman, whom he will not leave under the terror of such a sentence, and as he reasons extremely well when he pleases, I must needs give up the point *.”

It was, however, well known that the greatest of difficulties would arise in the matter of the reconciliation, from the inveterate hatred borne by the Marquis of Marignane to his son-in-law, and from the indifference of the Countess, who was entirely governed by her father. Besides, the Countess of Mirabeau, who was living in a house of opulence, and in a species of widowhood, enjoying a life of pleasure, and being the queen and idol of the most brilliant society, and spending her life amid fêtes, balls, concerts, and olympic dramas, of which her remarkable talents had given the first idea, and formed the principal ornament—had a natural dread of a conjugal life, passed in dependence and poverty, in an isolated castle situated in a wild country.

The Mirabeau family calculated that these difficul-

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated October 10th 1781.

ties, already so formidable, would be insurmountable if Mirabeau appeared to claim his wife before the sentence pronounced at Pontarlier was quashed. It was natural to suppose that the Marignane family would reproach him with his past errors, the publicity of his *liaisons*, and his flight with Madame de Monnier ; and lastly, that his condemnation to the capital punishment carried with it the loss of his civil rights.

Though these reasons were so conclusive, the family long hesitated as to which attempt was to obtain precedence of the other.

The question was debated principally by the Marquis of Mirabeau and the Bailli ; first, because the former concealed nothing from his brother ; and next, because, whatever period was fixed for attempting to bring the husband and wife together, the Bailli must of necessity take a share in it, for he resided in Provence, and had kept up a certain intercourse with the Marignane family ; and it could be only through him, and at his house, that Mirabeau could possibly prepare for and pursue the undertaking.

It was therefore to dispose the Bailli favourably towards lending his assistance in this matter that the Marquis wrote to him in the manner we have stated. But, attached as the Bailli was to his elder brother, to his house, and to his love of posterity, the thought of which he rejected from sheer weariness and from fear of difficulties to be overcome, he was, nevertheless, so

strongly prejudiced against his nephew, from the accounts of him which he had received from the Marquis during the last fifteen years, that he constantly refused to undertake the guardianship and mediation which Mirabeau's arrival at his house would necessarily impose upon him.

Long prior to this period he had written the following sentence, upon which the whole of his life was a most admirable commentary.

“ I am nothing of myself ; you are the chief of the family ; you have issue, and are still alive ; I am bound to you alone, and to yours through you. In one word, I am only the shirt, and you are the skin*.”

The reader will now see him threatening to abandon the family interest which he had so long defended with indefatigable zeal, and shrinking from an undertaking that alarmed him.

“ You are now writing romances upon domestic order, just as you formerly wrote them upon social order. I have no talent for composing romances. Honoré is the worst of those minds put out of shape by the mould in which they are cast. If, at thirty-two years of age he requires to be ridden with a curb rein, his understanding will never ripen, and we shall be both destroyed by your persevering in your own

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated July 27th 1776.

notions, which have occasioned all the misfortunes that have befallen you. These are numberless, because Providence has blown upon your plans and projects, and in the eyes of Providence, all that man performs is mere castle-building with cards *. If Honoré is not fit to be brought into the world, at his age,—if he is not sufficiently master of himself to avoid running his head against a post, it is madness to attempt making anything of him, but more than madness to endeavour to make him the father of a family. In such a case you must send him, as his good wife said, to the *Insurgents*, to have his head broken, or else to acquire a new disposition †. ‘But,’ say you, ‘we have no children.’ This is a very trifling misfortune. Our race has had its day: it is now extinct, and what

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 8th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 11th 1782. This very expression had been used by the Countess of Mirabeau, when the Bailli spoke to her about joining her husband after his release from the Donjon of Vincennes.

“She replied, that she had always desired his happiness, but could herself do nothing towards it; that he must do something to make amends for the past, such as going ‘to the Insurgents,’ and acquiring fame. I soon saw that the parrot had been taught its lesson; but I experienced a fit of indignation, which I had, however, strength to conceal.”—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 31st 1781.*

We need scarcely add that “going to the Insurgents” signified becoming one of the defenders of the new-born republic of the United States of America.

matters it? Those of Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and many others, have been swept from the earth, and yet the world goes on equally well. In this world we must either lose or leave all, an alternative which ought always to be with us on our pillow. What is the loss of a name—and what is even a name in the present times? Nevertheless I see that the disease of *posteromania* has grasped you by the throat, although you ought to consider that Cyrus and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus would have been fortunate had they not given birth to Cambyses and Commodus*. ‘But,’ you will again exclaim, ‘why then have we worked so much in imitation of our forefathers?’ to which I reply in your own words; for as you are always led away, head and heart, by the impulse of the moment, you are very subject to contradict yourself.

“Now, this is what you wrote to me three years ago, when you wished to keep your son in prison, where he had well earned his place.

“‘What matters it whether our children, before they consummated our ruin and their own, had shown all the signs of that depredating evaporation peculiar to the present age? And what should we have done if they had? And what could we have done? And wherefore? What matters it, at bottom, who enjoys

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 10th 1782.

these things after us? Does it become a Christian, that is to say, a man improved, seconded, directed, and supported in the true and quiet path of mankind, to run after the flying and rapid spark of human life?—to attach himself to the duration of his works upon earth?—to trouble himself about what will become of them after he is gone? If it is from love of knowledge that we have laboured, and sown here, we shall reap elsewhere; if it is to attract, we have already reaped the reward. We must not act from whim and vain-glory. Such frail motives have nothing to rest upon: and whoever finishes must expect that his son will demolish, or exaggerate, or desert—for such is man's nature. He may build, but wisdom and virtue alone can preserve; and whether we have children, or whether we have none, as we have enjoyed that which others have planted and built, so others in their turn will enjoy what we plant and build. Whoever they may be, our task is done; and being placed in this world, like the silk-worm, to bustle about until we have spun our cocoon to leave it soon after, let us not attempt to see further than the said worm. The other world is sufficient to occupy our attention, and through it only must we look at the future.'

"Thus, therefore, I conform to your own philosophy, although you have been pleased to change it; and I am more and more convinced that my posterity, which cannot but be your own, is of no greater import-

ance to me than a turnip *. I perceive by the natural progress of all things that high nobility must descend, which is worse than ceasing to exist. It has henceforth nothing but humiliation to undergo, and it is losing itself each day more and more, in the gulf of depredations †. The rabble take everywhere. Behold, to cure you of your name, the ignoble equilibrium which—until the general overturn that will speedily take place, and the volcanic eruption that will rid us of thirty strata of petrifying alluvion—is established and must be maintained in Europe by the inkstands which have at their command, gunpowder, printing, impiety and sedition ‡. Nations will never more return

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 2nd 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 17th 1782.

‡ Long before this period, the Bailli had often made similar remarks, and uttered similar prophecies. As we have not space to insert all that he wrote on the subject, we transcribe only one extract remarkable by its justness of perception and power of language.

“ I know Paris : be assured that the vile populace which crouches there or goes thither to crouch, in search of fortune, as if fortune was a lost whelp, is as corrupt as Rome when she endeavoured to destroy the patricians even to their very name. Depend upon it that this infamous population of upstarts who take the lead among the magistracy, or in the finance, is a true republican population by its insolence, at the same time that on account of its vices without any redeeming virtue, it is unworthy of being republican. When a people in delirium make an attack upon a monarchy, they always begin with religion. This soon puts an end to prestiges, and the difference which God himself has made between men by distinctions

to strong moral feelings. I ask you whether such being the case, the nobles will have a very gratifying part to play in future?—and whether it is pleasant to have children to see them hooted, if they are good, and reduced to become nothing but parasites and hangers-on at Court, where each purchases his authority and pays for it in dependence—the subaltern from the chief, the chief from the sovereign, the sovereign from etiquette*.

* * * * * *

“ I perceive that nobility is divided, and running to its ruin. It extends to the children of those blood-suckers, of those financial robbers introduced by the Pompadour, who herself sprang from this corruption †. Another part is connected with the quill-driving rab-

the first traces of which we find in the Jewish law, appears unjust to this people. It therefore undermines the nobility; and the chief of the social hierarchy, deprived of the natural supporters of his throne, feels that it totters, and he vacillates upon his sacred seat. Think you that there is any remedy? I believe there is, and I will tell you my reason for so believing. The distinction between the nobles and the plebeians is only moral and conventional; and if this distinction is once destroyed, the nobles are reduced to vain pretensions which render them worse than useless.”—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 30th 1759.*

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 18th 1763.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 26th 1761.

ble, who change into ink the blood of the King's subjects *. A third is perishing smothered by vile robes, and by ignoble atoms of the dust of the closet, drawn from the mire by the purchase of an office †. And what is worse, nobility is obliged to bend the knee before mushrooms that have sprung up in a single night—also before pumpkins which, thanks to the weakness of the government, rise on end upon their native beds of manure, and form an aristocracy of churlish blood which takes a dastardly pleasure in showing its authority to its former masters ‡. It is not worth the trouble to continue a race for this, or to witness a revolution which the entire destruction of all the springs of state, will necessarily produce §. I confess then that I, who am not the cause of your faggots turning out to be mere straw, upon which the wind has blown—that I who understand nothing about this *bisogna compaire*—that I, who have no joinings, but am wholly of my race—have no notion of killing nor even of committing, myself, for the advantage of having a few grandnephews spick and span new. Assure him from me that from hence to Malta there

* Unpublished letter, already quoted, from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 11th 1774.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 11th 1762.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated April 15th 1782.

§ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 8th 1782.

is only one road with which I am well acquainted. Tell him that if he tells lies, or teases me *, I shall leave him to cool his heels by himself, and shall soon place a few hundred thousand millions of tons of salt water between us †.

* * * * * “ Now, notwithstanding your statement and your letters, I tell you plainly that I give up all thoughts of taking charge of him. I know the ways of such gentlemen : they first of all do that which their noble imagination suggests, and then they ask leave to do it. Were I to take charge of him, I should, of a surety, commit myself. St. Francis of Sales pretends that we are not incommoded by elephants, the most bulky of all brutes, but by gnats which are very small. As you know your son much better than I do, and have absolute authority over him, why would you send him to me ? What would you have me do with him ? When you would lead an ass by another road than that which takes him to his usual drinking place, Tom Cudgel must threaten, and my lord’s hand point out the way. What am I to your son ‡ ? Who will assure me that all his dregs have dripped from him ? He does his best to please you ; he is very taking, but these are strong reasons for not

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 1st 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 27th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 20th 1782.

exposing me to become his dupe. Moreover, I know his morals, and to what tune he pipes ;—it costs him nothing to lie and to promise, but I believe in his promises as much as I do in the devil's miracles *. Lastly, youth is always in the right when opposed to age. To associate with him does not suit me. I should be blamed, if I turned him out. Say as much as you like, that the castle is your own ;—it is precisely because it is your own that it is his (and in consequence he has already pulled down and built up within its walls) —much more than it is mine, for it can never belong to me. And what would become of him if I turned him out of the castle, the only place in which he can live ? I see no appearance of his wife going back to him ; for he can gain her only through a triple file of collaterals ; and if they were together, his father-in-law would never give him house-room (for this would be stitching together muslin and leather) and his wife would be obliged to come to Mirabeau †. . . . Hence I conclude that sending him to me is quite useless, to say the least ; for he is neither the beginning, nor the end, nor the middle of a man, and I know no better than you how to form Caesars from the school of the Laridons ‡.

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 1st 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 31st 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 5th 1782.

“ You submit to what you consider your duty as a father. This is very right ; for it behoves you to ascertain whether he will bear seed, or whether he is nothing but chaff. But I, thank God ! am only an uncle, which neither gives me the right, nor imposes upon me the duty, of tutoring ; and I do not think it fair that I should have the burthen upon my shoulders of this turbulent, proud, conceited, and insubordinate spirit, who succeeds but too well in gaining every day, foot by foot, some point or other, and making himself a despot. I know, moreover, that he is captivating—that he is the rising sun, and I well know how I shall be cheated and plundered *. Of what good, therefore, is his presence here ? Can it be supposed that after fifty years of labour and tribulation I am desirous of embracing the worst labour of all, because you are pleased to say that I have ‘ quietude of heart, the reward of good men, that of the mind being prohibited to me by the entablature of my physical organs.’ I tell you that I have obtained both, and will enjoy them. You have replied, you say, to my observations about the castle of Mirabeau. But this reply signifies nothing at all. Ought I to support the infliction of a fellow with such a devouring mind, when I did not beget him ? It is singular you should say — ‘ that is not even in the order of follies belonging to him ? ’ Can follies be ranged in a circumscribed category ?

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 5th 1782.

*Is there any description of turbulent folly into which he has not fallen? How have I deserved from my family to be treated so harshly? Am I a burthen upon it *? "*

These letters produced no effect upon the Marquis, who always persevered in his own notions, as we have already shown. The Bailli, roused to anger by his brother's perseverance, persuaded himself that the Marquis, stimulated by private suggestions, was anxious to rid himself of his son. Full of this notion, he now, for the first time, expressed the resentment he felt towards Madame de Pailly, whom we have already mentioned, although we have avoided saying much about her. He had long considered this lady the cause of most of the domestic misfortunes which he had witnessed in his brother's family; for he knew that she was the malignant and perfidious instigator of the extreme rigour formerly pursued by the Marquis, over whom she had assumed absolute sway. When Mirabeau returned to his father's house, she went to visit Switzerland, her native country. The Bailli's mistrust constantly pursued this mischief-making mistress, and he attributed to her absence his brother's change of language. He likewise imputed to her expected return, the entreaties, which daily became more pressing, for him to take charge of his nephew; and he was the more

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated July 3rd 1782.

irritated, on this account, at the attempt to impose upon him a disagreeable task which he was vainly endeavouring to shun. He was moreover, uneasy concerning the responsibility connected with a circumstance, of which he had an unfavourable opinion. Lastly, he had at length overcome a reserve unaccountable to his friends, who well knew his manly candour and rigid veracity, and which surprised even ourselves as we read our immense collection of his letters. For the first time, during a period of forty-one years, he expressed his feelings concerning the improper influence exercised by Madame de Pailly; and his accusations were fully borne out by the timid and even evasive answers of the haughty man, who, with the sole exception of the Bailli, allowed no one belonging to him to ask him an embarrassing question.

“Too many people meddle with your concerns. You may understand me if you will. Let all that appears to you obscure be examined by yourself, and not by the eyes of strangers especially female eyes. The more such eyes display wit and fascination, the more are they to be mistrusted, like those of a beautiful Circe by whom a spirit of domination and jealousy is insinuated, that deceives the greatest men*. You tell me, as an excuse for insisting upon sending me your son, and leaving him with me, provided he is joined by the

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated October 28th 1782.

grasshopper which has chirped all the summer*, that, at your house, St. Jealousy, as our mother used to say, would take up her abode between the two sisters-in-law, if she of Aix was with you. In support of this you adduce the past†. You mistake what was then said; you give to words a meaning which they never had, and you take away that which it was quite natural they should have; for somebody was determined that there should be no head-dresses in the house—even my hat displeased‡. Women can do nothing but plot, especially women of talent, who are the most dangerous species of animal. She in whom you place a too extensive confidence, is like all the others: she will be mistress; all who would oppose her sway, or share it with her, displease her and she hates them cordially. It is a general rule without exception, that a woman in her situation will govern absolutely, and she does so. I cannot now call to mind a thousand little things with regard to myself, for I cared not a rush about them; but that which did not affect me, a free individual, would greatly affect your children. She never liked either of them, though, it must be confessed that, with

* An allusion to the Countess of Mirabeau, who was a fine singer, and spent her time at private concerts and private dramatic lyrics.

† In 1774 Mesdames de Mirabeau and du Saillant had spent together several months, at Bignon.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 16th 1782.

the sole exception of Saillanette, none of them were very amiable. But with reference to Caroline* herself—our gentle and peaceful Caroline, the most soothing woman that ever lived, who has no eyes but for her father, her husband and her children, and who loves you so dearly, you would make a sad mistake if you thought the other liked her. Depend upon it that without mixing myself up too much with such matters, I see pretty nearly all, and I let things go on because I know that it is impossible to prevent a river from running†.”

The Marquis betrayed no surprise at this unexpected attack but replied as follows.

“The Bailli John Anthony was not in good humour the other day. *Item*, if the grand cross was a safeguard against such sorts of parentheses, we should see more candidates for it. Be that as it may, our two hearts, formed to amalgamate with each other, laugh and embrace each other in the presence of our minds at times and by chance at variance. I must then enter into a matter which you have begun with a confidence that does me honour, and a delicacy that affects me.

“With my sixty-seven years over my head, spent in assiduously performing my duties towards my family

* Saillanette, Caroline, the former a soubriquet, the latter the Christian name of Madame du Saillant.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated October 29th 1781.

and society, so far as I have been able to make them out, I may admit that I have a female friend who has loaded me with benefits, and devoted herself to four generations of my family. Until my mother died, she served her; and as for me, her property, her care, her time, all has been mine. My horses and my furniture came from her hand, and always as and when I desired the same; and even against her own judgment and interest. The purchase of my hotel, for instance, would never have been her choice*. During the storms of my life, when all the world would have withdrawn from me, because I was considered prostrate—when the wreck of what I had left did not reach half way up my leg, and many deserted me, she hoisted the signal of constancy, and even braved, and subsequently forgave personal insult—she who is so apt to take offence. If my daughter is the wife of Du Saillant, and not a Benedictine nun, she owes it to her; for she was to have set out next day for Montargis†, if this able woman had not undertaken her case.

* * * * *

* This is a piece of indirect flattery to the Bailli, who always blamed this purchase made against his advice, and which, to his great regret, settled the Marquis at Paris.

† Before Madame du Saillant was married, and when she was only sixteen, she had a childish fancy to become a nun, like her eldest sister, Mary-Ann Jane, born July 10th 1745, then a nun in the convent of the Ladies of St. Dominic, at Montargis, where she took the veil March 13th 1763. We find, on this subject, the following

“ After this, my dear brother, would you suspect such a heart and such a head of petty jealousy in detail?—and would you esteem me so little—or, to speak more correctly, do you know me so ill as to believe that a person could gain my confidence by setting me by the ears with my children. Now, if I have ever evinced any good quality, it is that of getting rid of annoyances. Never was a man more surrounded and circumscribed by three ineffable generations of this description ; but I have walked over them without notice, as I do over the mushrooms in my lawn. I must, however, say, that without this quality I should long since been a poor, isolated wretch, left alone to make speeches in the valley of Jehosaphat ; and I have found myself so circumstanced, that weariness under my burthen would have been very excusable*.”

The ice once broken, the Bailli did not hesitate to reply to his brother’s insufficient justification.

“ I now come to the point on which you say I have attacked you, and on which, saving your presence, you have the weakness of great men—a weakness you will never get over, because our passions harden with our

passage in a letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Duke of Nivernois, dated July 14th 1763 :—

“ It is my intention to withdraw from her convent, and keep near my mother, my second daughter ; and the more so, because she makes a signal of vocation, and I feel a repugnance at making a sheepfold of nuns.”

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 3rd 1781.

bones, instead of declining with our age. Let this be told you *en passant* ; for people flatter you, and you flatter yourself. Now, my duty of administering to you the antidote, shall not yield to the fear of displeasing you by its bitterness.

“ You confidently suppose that I am unable to refute any of the things which you state to be deserving of your gratitude. *Bene sit*—I have nothing to say upon this score. But were your reasons even stronger than you think them—and were it true, as you believe it is, that you owe much gratitude, it is not less true that, in my judgment, and in the opinion of all who take interest in the matter, she has certainly brought much evil upon you and yours, although perhaps innocently, and being herself blinded by certain objects. Nobody ever mentioned her to me, except with a sneer, and everybody thought that the jealousy of your adverse party * was well founded. You are far from having procreated angels ; but had your children been angels, they never would have submitted, without vexation, to have been governed and scolded, in their father’s house, by a stranger, even were she their step-mother : but as they are in reality children of headstrong tempers, this vexation appears prominently. Tell me not that she has always avoided speaking harshly to them, for if you believe this, you are under

* The Marchioness of Mirabeau, who during twelve years had been engaged in a law suit against her husband.

a great mistake. I was once obliged to interfere, and to tell her that young people did not like to be taken to task by those to whom they had not the honour of belonging*.”

We must here find place for an extract in which the panegyrist himself of Madame du Pailli describes the sway she exercised over the Marquis's young family, who, as the Bailli very justly observed, must have found it hard to be borne.

“ The black lady† would make the best and most useful duenna in the world, When I had my daughter‡ nearer home, I was obliged to promise the lady, that I would not see my child more than once a-year until she was married ; that this should be only on one day, and that I should never write to her. With great difficulty did I obtain peace at this price ; for she wishes all my children to belong to religious orders, and I was never less disposed to agree to such a thing §.”

We return to the Bailli.

“ I did not write the words ‘ fraudulent enemy’,

* Unpublished Letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 15th 1781.

† Madame du Pailli, who had adopted the practice, which she never discontinued, of wearing black.

‡ Louisa, afterwards Madame de Cabris, then only twelve years of age. She was at first sent for education to a convent in Limousin, and afterwards removed to that of the Ladies of St. Dominic at Montargis.

§ Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Countess of Rochefort, dated August 7th 1764.

which you have used ; but had I done so, I would not disavow the expression, for she is certainly the enemy of every one who has any share of your confidence ; and had it been possible to destroy your affection for me, be assured she would have made the attempt. She treated me as a friend, because she did not dare to treat me otherwise. God forbid, however, that I should wish to deprive you of what is a consolation to you. I am willing to believe that the person in question is not so bad as she is supposed to be by those who have seen her conduct towards your children ; but she is a woman, and likes to govern ; and she mechanically follows her instinct *.”

The Marquis replied as follows :—

“ With due deference, you have just as good a claim to the title of commander-general of the squadrons of idle talkers, as of those of Malta. But, plague on it, I must answer you, and rip open this ticklish question. In the first place, I shall state that if I were a fourth person in the Trinity, it would be impossible for me to do better than the three others ; and yet they have not satisfied the whole world. Now, it is probably not from the likings and the dislikings of my strange family that you would judge of my inclinations. Form your opinion from your own examination. I have certainly to thank you for the mark of esteem and true

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 28th 1781.

and noble affection that you give me by writing to me as you do. I know that the weakness of great men is the vice of little men, and I may have been mistaken when I thought that he who had the vice, had also the weakness (Henry IV. and Marshal Saxe were both in this predicament); but that he who had the weakness might possibly not have the vice (such was the case with Messrs. de Turenne and Bayard). I also thought that with such a weakness a man lived double time, and was consequently doubly worried; and that he who had it not was more isolated and more sad. Now, you know that nothing is true but what we believe to be so. However, it is more than useless to ratiocinate upon this point, because it is as much determined by nature, as to be born with light or dark hair.

“ But that which I decidedly believe—and I have been confirmed in my belief by the science of life—is that this taste is a folly in fools, and a wise thing in a properly constituted mind. I may say with truth, my dear brother, that if I knew a man in the world who had a stronger desire to be good than I have, I really think I should call upon him and beg his receipt. This real desire, and the natural exertions always resulting from it, when it is real, has long existed in me. In this respect I have many physical constitutional defects to overcome, but none intellectual; and I can assure you that, at all times, if any person has influence on my mind, it is in proportion as that person appears

to me good, or to have been good,—for I have shown that I could impose silence upon weaknesses when they peeped forth. I do not say that a malicious person, even a servant, might not produce an effect upon me, even though I despised the tale-bearer; but my want of curiosity, quite singular in its way, has preserved me from such a snare. With this sole exception, no one ever obtained any real influence over my mind except through esteem.

“ If, after this, you see blue when I see yellow, it is a point not to be argued, because assuredly the present case is not your own, or else all the rules would be wrong. I mean the rules of reciprocity, seeing the marked and particular esteem in which I have always held you, even to the preferring, at all times, of your character to my own. But, so far as I am myself concerned, I have my proofs. I cannot deny that there exists the greatest confidence or, if you will, the greatest infatuation. But it is precisely since this exists that I have done all for my children, even to despoiling myself. I settled them too early in life, with exertions and in a manner that no other parent would have attempted; these children therefore have no reason to complain of her influence over my mind.

“ When, after this, on certain occasions, a person who has seen young people come into the world, and grow up under her eye in a house where she resided as an intimate friend, may have warned them with but little precaution, of what might displease their father,

whose feelings she well knew, it ill became them to be angry, even should she on such occasions display ill-humour for an instant *,

* * * * *

“ I have always perceived, or nearly so, the defects of those I love ; and such defects are the only ones I can see clearly. But for the want of archangels, we must love imperfect creatures. A man need not have lived to my age to be convinced of this fact ; for were it not so, he would take an aversion to himself. You are perfectly right in stating that gnats incommode more than elephants, and when we would describe a gnat by its venom, we magnify it into an elephant. I assure you, for instance, that the person we are speaking of, and at whom you have poured a broadside of sarcasms ‘cutting and pointed at the tail,’ as Montaigne terms them, has said to me perhaps more than five hundred times, during the long series of my inflections, in which many mistakes and impositions have existed,

“ ‘ Many honest people take a real interest in you ; even the public would be indignant at such misfortunes, if you did not bear them. But you have here hearts truly yours, that of the good Bailli and mine †.’

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 30th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated December 24th 1781.

"The good Bailli!" replied the truth-telling and zealous uncle, "the good Bailli! By St. Polycarpus, Sir Marquis and very dear elder brother, to whom would you have my excellency talk idly, if it be not to yourself. The good Bailli, indeed! The person who uttered this is guilty of duplicity; the 'good Bailli' knows and has long seen it without saying a word. Even since 1750, he has perceived that this person disliked him, and had she thought it possible to deprive him of your affection, you would also have perceived her dislike. Since that period, I have seen a hundred times, that she regarded the two brothers* with the most implacable hatred, of which I had my share, as also had Saillanette and Du Saillant†. Believe what I say: when a woman, who is a stranger, introduces herself into a family, she raises up discord, and stirs up all the evil passions to which discord gives birth. However, let us say no more on the subject‡."

* Mirabeau, and his brother the Viscount.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 12th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated January 15th 1782.

Notwithstanding the resistance of the Marquis, we may infer from the following passage in a letter addressed by Mirabeau to his sister, that the Bailli's observations had produced some effect.

"Madame du Pailli has written to me to day almost a letter of apology, which, joined to the softened epistle I have received from my father, shows me very clearly that some of my uncle's shots have taken effect."

But the Marquis, heated by opposition to his will, chose to continue the discussion.

“Since,” he wrote, “the volcano of John Anthony still smokes, and its lava has not left off running, let it suffice for me to beg you to believe, that I have never yet been, nor am now, nor perhaps shall be for a long time to come, an idiot. I was silly in carrying too far my notions of certain duties. I hope I shall be cured of this by rather harsh and often-repeated remedies; but in God’s name, say nothing more about the pretended enemy. By God’s cross, had she been his enemy, he would never have left Vincennes *! But for her he would have died in prison, for she obtained his release †.”

“What a confession has escaped you!” was the Bailli’s reply. “You pretend that she exercises no influence over you, and you admit, in the same breath, that if she had pleased, Honoré would still be at Vincennes. You have said more than you intended to say, or perhaps knew of your domestic influences. But I have always known beyond a doubt, that this woman has never ceased assiduously striving to sever your children from you, and you from them, and to separate

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated April 9th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated April 15th 1782.

you from all those who ought, by nature, to be near you *.

* * * * *

“Whatever reliance I may place upon a father, always speaking of his children, I must observe, because I know it to be a fact, that all the family, myself included, have a snake near you which hisses into your ear, things to their disadvantage; and, on my honour, you ought to beware of this reptile. You are aware that I am tardy in making assertions, and that I never do so but upon full conviction.

“I know well enough that your answer will be all about ‘great obligations,’ and so forth. The whole of your reply is in my head by anticipation; but your answer to one question is not there, and this question is—what business has a woman, a stranger to the family, to meddle with its concerns? Now, I have said all, and have done with the subject†.”

The Marquis was now seriously offended.

“As, at all events,” he replied, “you will have enough to do with Honoré’s education without taking the additional burthen of mine, which you are following up with a veracity that does honour to us both, I do not render your judgment subservient to my own,

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 25th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 21st 1782.

but admit the truth of your imputations, and leave you to your convictions*.”

The Bailli at length closed this contention in the following words—

“I perceive by this expression in your letter, ‘You will have enough to do with Honoré’s education without taking the additional burthen of mine,’ that you are a little angry. I have stated what I thought, without any intention of working at your ‘education,’ and still less of offending you. But I have told you the truth, which almost always displeases. You have yourself written as follows—

“ ‘Woe to him who draws upon himself, not offensive truths, which must not be uttered, but offences on behalf of truth †.’ ”

Nothing, assuredly, can better show the particular feelings by which the Marquis and the Bailli were actuated, than this passing though warm altercation. It is the only quarrel between them which we can find in a collection of more than four thousand letters written in the course of fifty years, by the two brothers, always so tenderly united. The Bailli’s remarks on the present occasion may be considered more important, because they were made spontaneously, and without

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 8th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 15th 1782.

his being acted upon by any influence whatever: for he was alone at Aix, where his nephew did not join him till long afterwards. We shall close this episode with a reflection which the reader has, perhaps, already anticipated.

Almost at the commencement of our task, we mentioned the injurious power usurped by Madame du Pailly in the Mirabeau family during almost half a century; we stated her absolute rule over the Marquis, the hatred she bore to his son, and her direct, continual, and always fatal influence over the fate of that son, whose errors and wanderings may be accounted for much better by false measures and irritating rigour, than by the passions which had germinated in a temperament morally and physically exuberant and fiery. Having advanced on this subject nothing but unsubstantiated assertions, it became our duty to prove them by evidence, especially as our mission is to contradict most of those who have preceded us as Mirabeau's biographers. This we could not do effectually, without proving all that we advance for that purpose. Besides, none of our predecessors have made any more than a vague, hearsay allusion to a fact, of which Mirabeau, in his letters from Vincennes*, says only a few words, but which forms his most conclusive justification; and with regard to his father, the most natural and decisive

* Vol. I. pp. 7, 194, 264; Vol. II. p. 283; unpublished letter to Vitry, p. 132.

explanation of the errors into which a master mind was dragged, by inhuman and unnatural measures.

This we trust will be received as our excuse, if, having mistaken the value, effect, and measure of our materials, we have extended our evidence to too great a length. We now take leave of this subject, to return to the appeal from the sentence of condemnation pronounced against Mirabeau, in his absence,—a period which we had reached when we were led to interrupt our narrative, and to anticipate, in the date of the extracts we have given, the events we are now about to relate.

Formerly, the Marquis of Mirabeau had attached but little importance to this condemnation of his son; for he wrote on the subject as follows:

“It is nothing but a sentence still; and were it, on appeal, confirmed by a decree, it is too severe and would not be executed *.”

Subsequently, he had less confidence in the case.

“Honoré,” he again wrote, “has the other business in his head, namely, that of keeping this latter upon his shoulders. Now, this business which he at first looked upon, and continues to look upon as so very easy, will perhaps turn out as difficult as the first he undertook†.” “All the best and most able criminalists whom

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 5th 1777.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated February 16th 1781. This was an allusion to

I have consulted say that the case is frightfully complicated, and the sentence well combined and secure against an appeal, whilst its terms are so general that they place the culprit's life at the absolute mercy of the judge, and this for a crime never before committed even from the days of Louis the Fat, and against which the law could not have provided, Honoré will believe nothing of the kind; he gets furious, becomes red in the face, and scribbles night and day *."

The Bailli also "would believe nothing."

"The full particulars," he wrote, "of the Pontarlier business, are not yet known to me; but I have common sense, and am out of my teens. If it be true that the silly woman went to him, and that he did not carry her off from her own house, it then becomes her affair, not his. The business is as simple to every other person as to ourselves. But truly all the scoundrels in Europe—I mean all the Knights of the inkhorn, a set of rascals whom your favourite Turgotism has rendered more mutinous than ever—together with the farmers of the revenue, *et hoc genus omne*, have sworn to overthrow the nobles, and your house in particular†. Louis XV, I believe, lived some little time later than Louis the Fat, and yet the crime with which your son is charged

Mirabeau's attempt to bring his mother to an amicable settlement with his father.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 18th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, with same date.

occurred two hundred times during his reign, twenty times of which it took place in Provence. It is true that in two cases which are now before me, the husband was not mean enough to prosecute either criminally or otherwise.

“How can a man of your attainments suffer himself to be told that the crime is without example, and that the law has not provided against the abduction of another man’s wife?—The law has applied a penalty to this offence, and not a year passes but, in some part of the kingdom or other, the penalty is enforced. Now the whole question is, I say not morally, for a crime is always a crime, but legally—to know whether Honoré really carried off this woman. If he did, it makes the thing very serious; but if she went to him it materially alters the case, and the thing pardonable enough. She alone would then be seriously implicated. Now the fact proved is that the madcap fled alone from her old husband, and went to seek the other beyond the French frontier. This is the buckler and javelin of your son’s defence. A young and handsome woman goes to a young man of twenty-six: and where will you find a young man, who does not pick up whatever he finds of this description in his road? In the present case it may well be said: let him who is guiltless cast the first stone.’ But first, You have to do with the robed rabble, who are injured by the fact as it stands; and how could you possibly obtain justice from the agents

of injustice clad in the mantle of justice? – Secondly, You have yourself offended this rabble, by your writings about the regulations*. It would have been much better to have placed in the catalogue of saints celebrated by Bussy, all the court, the Marshals of France, &c., than to have dishonoured the nuptial couch of an old upstart dotard raised, like a scene in a theatre, by a whistle, and upon whose shield a venal charge had placed the fleur-de-lys†. It would have been far better to have killed four princes, than to have wounded the pretended honour of an old law noble, a species of men who must of necessity lead either to an aristo-democracy, or to the harshest despotism, and who are supported by each other in such a manner that every thing belonging to them is sacred ‡.”

Notwithstanding the doubts raised by one brother and repelled by the other, the appeal was determined

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated September 29th 1781. We also find in it this passage connected with a fact which we have already mentioned in a former part of this work.

“We should know what we can depend upon with reference to the pretended abduction, if it were possible to expect the truth from a woman. You must remember that, in 1778, I begged you would obtain something in the hand-writing of this one, to compare it with a letter addressed to the Marchioness of Vence, and signed by this Madame de Monnier, who therein completely exonerated the Count.”

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated October 16th 1781.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated October 16th 1781.

upon. But the difficulty was, how to proceed in reviving this dangerous litigation. They feared the discussion concerning the lengthened procedure which took place prior to the condemnation by default, as leading to the probable necessity of beginning it over again. This would occupy an immense time, put the party to a prodigious expense, bring before a public court of justice a name already rendered notorious by being mentioned in the lawsuit between the Marquis and Marchioness of Mirabeau, and in the complaint made by their daughter, Madame de Cabris. It would likewise revive the remembrance of Mirabeau's errors, provoke fatal recriminations and furious pleadings, and complicate the already difficult reconciliation to be effected in Provence, which it would render much more doubtful.

The family was much struck with these considerations; and an appeal from justice to favour was thought of—from the tribunal which had condemned, to the sovereign; in one word, it was proposed to solicit letters of abolition. The plan was laid down—the success was certain; “for,” wrote the Marquis, “all the cabinets are made of butter, and the powers themselves of brass*.” But this project could not be carried into execution without Mirabeau's concurrence, which he peremptorily refused, because the absolution freed him alone, and he would not separate his case from

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 28th 1781.

that of Sophie. This generous woman wrote to insist upon his giving up so dangerous a partnership, and consenting to the measure proposed.

This fact is not given upon the sole affirmation of Mirabeau. We shall soon present other evidence, but we first present his.

Two months subsequently, he exclaimed before his judges :—

“The sentence passed at Pontarlier is dreadful ; the procedure is disgraceful. Presumptions have received, by all sorts of manœuvres, the force of proofs. The mistakes or the prejudices of judges are formidable things. The offence of which you are accused is not infamous among us. Throw yourself upon the King’s mercy, and demand letters of abolition *. But, would I confess myself guilty and thus furnish evidence

* “ Perhaps it will easily be credited, that a man of my condition, who has had to fight against the most inveterate enemies, might employ more than one means of support. But I chose to have no other than that venerable protection which the law commands its indifferent agents to afford. I would oppose only the rights which I hold in common with the most obscure citizens, to enemies who, in their own towns, force me to appeal before courts of justice, filled, they say, with their relatives and friends. And whilst they are busy in researches, in exertions, in consultations, and in intrigues, I accept all, I endure all, I dictate all—I am sufficient for myself. I am arrested ; quirks and quibbles of all sorts are placed before my footsteps ; and disgust, and delays, and lengthened proceedings are multiplied. But what matters it ?—ought I not to have expected this ?”—*Second Case for Counsel’s Opinion, page 75 of the 8vo. edition.*

against the unfortunate woman to effect whose ruin I have been made the occasion and pretence? No, certainly, I would not be guilty of such baseness! My heart, my conscience, and my reason tell me that I have nothing to fear. I will go to my judges, said I and if I find only murderers—well! there remains plenty of my name to avenge my blood and my memory*.”

Besides this public declaration, Mirabeau shortly afterwards wrote thus:—

“ Your friend will have the sweet pleasure of having made amends by his first effort, and from the very moment he was permitted to act, for the misfortunes of a woman whom he had unhappily committed to such an extent †.”

* *First Case for Counsel's Opinion*, &c., page 12 of the 8vo. edition. Mirabeau had already made the same profession of faith in a letter not intended to be made public.

“ All I know,” he wrote, “ is this: I laugh at the proceedings so far as I am myself concerned; for I have a thousand ways both in fact and in law to overthrow them. But I will never forgive the insult of my execution in effigy except on the most favourable conditions for Madame de Monnier. I will sign only at this price.”—*Unpublished Letter to Boucher, dated October 5th 1779.*

† Unpublished letters from Mirabeau to Vitry, page 65. In acting thus, Mirabeau recollected, much better than Sophie herself, who was at this time led away by a feeling of generosity, what she had previously thought and wrote.

“ The judgment pronounced must be either annulled or confirmed. If I am declared an adulteress, my dower will be confiscated; if I am not declared such, I cannot lose my rights. Fortune, and even life affect me but little. But my honour will not allow this matter to rest as it is; it must be brought to a close at all risks.”—*Letter*

The fact of Mirabeau's courageous and just refusal to solicit letters of abolition, is, as we have already stated, attested by others besides himself. The following proof is quite sufficient without our giving any other.

"If Gabriel had not wished to save his accomplice, he would not so peremptorily have refused letters of abolition. And to make an end of the matter, he would have quietly drawn himself out of the scrape without her; for you are well aware that it was not to him that Madame de Valdahon was hostile, since he was not her father's wife*."

The family were therefore obliged to make up their minds to the appeal. But how was it to be conducted? The father and uncle were of opinion that the defence should be timid and even supplicating; and they insisted the more upon this because, at the beginning, the party appealing had no adverse party in the civil part of the action†, and the accuser had, as it were, failed in his accusation, since the Marquis of Monnier, who, in his original complaint had not even mentioned

already quoted from Madame de Monnier to her mother, Madame de Ruffey, dated June 19th 1776.

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 27th 1782.

† According to the criminal law of France, the public prosecutor can alone prosecute a criminal suit; the injured party may become *partie civile*, and can sue only for civil damages, though, if the prosecution fails, the *partie civile* pays all the costs.—TR.

the fact of adultery, was, from age, infirmity, blindness, a fit of piety, and “ a complete indifference to the affairs of this world,” unable to appear against him *, and that the instance would be maintained by Madame de Valdahon alone, whom no personal injury had excited against the party appealing †, and who had then nothing to fear from little Gabrielle Sophie, that child having died two years previously. Madame Valdahon could now have only one subject of apprehension that of seeing her step-mother, Madame de Monnier, again appear and claim a restitution of conjugal rights. But being freed from this apprehension by a formal renunciation, she was little disposed to carry matters to extremities in a criminal prosecution, the enormous expense of which might put her to great inconvenience, if it ended in the acquittal of the accused.

This feeling in the only adverse party Mirabeau had, led to the opinion of his father and uncle, that he ought to present himself in the most modest attitude. How many other men in his situation would have done so,

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated January 19th 1782.

† Far from it ; for it was to the consequences of Mirabeau's passion for her step-mother that she owed her return to her father's house whence she had been driven for twenty years (*second case for Counsel's opinion*, &c., p. 60), and the certainty, thenceforward not doubtful, of recovering her rights as the daughter of the Marquis of Monnier, which rights had been destroyed ever since 1768, by her exheredation incurred by her marriage with M. de Valdahon, and by the second marriage of the vindictive old man.

or else avoided placing themselves at the disposal of a set of prejudiced judges, who had already condemned him to death. Mirabeau, on the contrary, went, with a calm eye, to brave the danger. He had, no doubt, resolved to persist in his efforts at conciliation; but if he failed, he would make a defence quite the reverse of the one indicated by his family. Every thing urged him to this—his fiery nature, a sense of his power, and the instinctive want of bringing it into play. His conviction of the illegality of the procedure*, the singular omission in the accusation of the nominative crime of adultery, the want of legal evidence, the absurdity of a “rape of seduction,” committed “upon a married woman†”, the wish of awakening interest in behalf of his co-accused, the pity excited by his own misfortunes, the indignation caused by an extra-legal and over

* This is what Mirabeau said of the procedure, two years before he endeavoured to get it quashed.

“The notice you give me of the procedure, proves perfectly well that which I never doubted, namely, that it is absurd and cannot be maintained. It could not stand an instant against a simple statement of the contradictions and evident falsehoods which it contains.”
—*Original letters from Vincennes, Vol. IV. page 234.*

† “The discoveries we have made here, and the means given to us, have enabled us to embrace a system of defence which exonerates Madame de Monnier as well as myself; for the charge of adultery is not more maintainable, on account of the nature of their evidence obtained in a foreign country, and of which a French tribunal can make no use, than *the rape of seduction*, by the nature of the crime which, towards a married woman, is a purely imaginary one.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated February 14th 1782.*

severe sentence—the hope of alarming his adverse party, who had so little interest in the litigation—and lastly, the advantage of being able, at a subsequent period, to make good use, in Provence, of a haughty and vehement defence, which should at the same time attack and accuse; all this determined Mirabeau to be moderate, and display humility only at the commencement of the business, but to become himself again when his entreaties should be repulsed, and to throw far from him the mark imposed upon him by his family, so soon as he should be forced to appear in the presence of his judges, whom it was his intention to brave, and of his accusers, whom he resolved to reduce to silence.

What we have before said concerning the plan of our work, and the spirit in which it is written, renders it unnecessary for us to give a lengthened account of this appeal, and to transcribe a great number of extracts from the statements published—extracts which others have so liberally supplied as to fill nearly a volume*. We shall not follow this example, not only because it

* Peuchet, Vol. II. pp. 20 to 126. Vitry, pp. 77 to 115; 133 to 189; 200 to 229. This abuse of quotation ought to be avoided the more because the statements published are by no means scarce, and they contain many passages to be found in the letters from Vincennes, whence Mirabeau took them; first, because he was accustomed to borrow from himself; and next, because he was far from supposing that those letters would ever be published.

In the statements from Pontarlier and Aix, some paragraphs may be found which are in the letters written by Mirabeau to Vitry, who published them in 1806.

is our wish to insert only that which cannot be found in any other work, but because a much more serious motive imposes upon us very great prudence in this respect.

We admit, and many persons know, that Mirabeau's printed statements are full of eloquence, to such a degree that they form a model of judicial argument, and display the germ of that immense power which Mirabeau afterwards developed as an orator. But these documents, have the disadvantage, at least for ourselves, of treating only of a private question, reviving deplorable facts—implicating names which should not now be uttered, because they were borne by honourable persons, whose lives, troubled by his passions, have since ended—and presenting odious recriminations, and, let us not mince the expression, immoral justifications.

We shall therefore reduce this lamentable subject to a rapid position of the successive plans of the appeal; borrowing our account principally from the unpublished family correspondence.

BOOK XI.

ON the 2nd of February 1782, Mirabeau, full of hope and courage, left Bignon *.

“ He yesterday set sail with very good grace, that is to say, in a noble and affecting manner ; and they are now upon the road supplied with everything necessary to their undertaking. I have declared that I am no

* Some biographers, on the authority of Cadet Gassicourt (p. 27, first edition, and 21 of the second) have stated that before Mirabeau's departure, he “shared with Madame Monnier an active poison which he had been prepared under his directions.” We have no knowledge of this fact, neither do we believe it to be true. Cadet Gassicourt throws a doubt upon his own statement, by thoughtlessly adding in a note—“Manuel one day showed me at Desenne's [the bookseller] the little bag containing these two articles [the poison and a lock of hair.] He had *stolen* it with Mirabeau's letters.” Now, Manuel could not have stolen anything from the police-office but what was there ; and this consisted of what had been deposited there by Boucher, from the beginning of the correspondence from Vincennes to its conclusion on the 13th of December 1780. For the bag in question to have been there, Mirabeau

longer a writer, especially on important matters, there being nothing so ridiculous as a dialogue between the highway and the chimney corner *."

The Marquis still persevered in his favourable feelings, or at least in assuming them if they were not real; for in the same letter he says :—

" He continues turbulent and irregular; but he intends to correct himself, and is not troublesome. He is kind and noble, and all agree that he has a good heart †. Honoré and consort ‡ found the winter rather late, for it is only just set in; and as the snow is seven or eight feet deep in the country in which they are, the surplus at first appeared strange to your nephew who has become 'an advocate in the court.' But he is rural and bold. Ever since the days of the late Julius

must have carried it thither two years after his release. Who, therefore, can credit such an assertion so positively contradicted by date, to which most of Mirabeau's biographers have paid no more attention than they have to truth, and even probability?

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 3rd 1782.

† Same unpublished letter.

‡ He was accompanied by an advocate named Desbirons, who filled the office of Procureur du Roi at the little town of Cheroy-en-Gatinais. Desbirons, who had knowledge and talent, acted nevertheless only as Mirabeau's examiner of documents and copying clerk. His letters, which we possess, often express in the most humorous manner his surprise and vexation at being reduced, by the unexpected superiority and ascendancy of his client, to play such a part.

Cæsar, audacity and rashness have no where existed so strongly as in him. He pretends that he has a portion of Cæsar's star; he has, certainly, less genius, but great talent, though unhappily he looks from right to left. In a case like the present, I place great reliance upon his skill and abilities *."

Having been delayed by accidents on the road, Mirabeau did not reach Dijon till the 6th of February. His advocate, Desbirons, called upon Madame de Ruffey, who promised, if she did not join in the appeal, at least to sanction any compromise in which the most favourable terms possible should be stipulated for on behalf of her daughter.

On the 8th of February, Mirabeau, who had merely passed through Pontarlier and taken up his temporary abode upon the Swiss frontier, sent his advocate to attempt an arrangement with Madame de Valdahon, the Marquis of Monnier being inaccessible †. But this

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 15th 1782.

† "We knew that the gates of Tænarus are not more strictly guarded; we were aware that Madame de Valdahon had her father's house guarded by the Maréchaussée. We also knew that the unhappy old man had been deprived of all his old servants, and was surrounded by emissaries who reported his very words, gestures, and even signs; thus placing an impenetrable barrier betwixt him and all that could remind him of his involuntary injustice and their unfortunate victim."—*First case for Counsel's opinion in the matter of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier*, p.14, 8vo edition.

lady refused to see Desbirons.* On the 9th, Mirabeau wrote to her in this advocate's name, a strong, but measured and conciliatory letter†, in which he solicited an early reply, because he had reason to fear that snares would be laid for him‡. This step was also unsuccessful. On the 12th, Mirabeau surrendered himself a prisoner, but it was with the greatest difficulty that he could obtain an entry in the prison register that he "had voluntarily presented himself." This first difficulty made him anticipate many others, which were soon realised. One among them was this:—although his condemnation had resulted from a complaint made by the husband, and this complaint, which was vague and insufficient, did not specify the fact of adultery,—a strong means of defence for the accused, as none but a husband could legally prefer such a charge—still Mirabeau could not obtain a copy of this complaint, nor permission to see it, nor that it should be read to him, nor even that it should be countersigned *ne varietur* §.

* Ibid. p. 14.

† Ibid. pp. 16, 17, 18, and 19.

‡ "He (Mirabeau) cannot, under the most frivolous pretences, remain concealed, and expose himself to its being perfidiously stated hereafter that he has been arrested, whilst the truth is he has come to give himself up voluntarily." — *First case for Counsel's opinion in the matter of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier*, p. 18, 8vo edition.

§ The Commissioner would not allow me to see this document, the immutability of which I had such strong reasons for securing by

He did not, however, take an undue advantage of the irregularities of form in the proceedings, to avoid a series of interrogatories, in which his defence assumed so hostile a character that a proposal of compromise was made to him. This he would not now listen to, except on condition of his being provisionally released from prison, which was granted by interlocutory sentence on the 16th. But an appeal from this sentence was immediately entered, Sombarde, assistant to the Procureur du Roi, then acting as public prosecutor. It was now that Mirabeau published his first case for Counsel's opinion. The tone and measure of this publication may be judged of from what the writer himself says of it.

“If anything is more to be regretted than having committed grievous wrongs, it is the necessity imposed, by the natural disgust which they inspire, of defending ourselves against those falsely imputed to us. But when a man is sorry, from the bottom of his soul, for those he has really committed, and feels an earnest wish to hide them under the cloak of a life perfectly honourable in future; when he can with truth assert that extreme sensibility, and inflexible honesty have attended those errors which cannot be denied, he consoles himself sufficiently at least not to lose his courage, but to

every possible means, physical and moral.”—*First case for Counsel's opinion in the matter of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier*, p. 26, 8vo edition.

render it mild and patient *. He believes that there is, perhaps, greater courage in confessing his faults, than in not committing any : in the former case he expresses his repentance and regret with just and noble candour—he atones for the wrongs he has committed, as much as lies in his power—he endeavours to justify the indulgence of the friends who have remained faithful to him—to bring back those who have withdrawn their regard from him, and to disarm his enemies by applauding their good qualities and forgiving their faults. He does his best to act with rectitude, calmness, and propriety :—having done this, he may lift up his head, and look his calumniators in the face.

“ I have now begun. In a former statement † I raised a corner of the veil in which those, who chose to prosecute the sad suit which necessitates this statement, would fain unfold themselves. I have used more delicate precautions towards them than towards myself, because to obtain justice from others, a man must begin by doing it to himself‡.”

We here add the energetic and unanswerable conclusion of this statement.

* “Reasons without number have imposed upon me the duty of a moderation which I have always considered a virtue of a more lofty character, because my fiery temper renders it less natural.” *Third case for Counsel's opinion in the matter of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier*, p. 6, of the 8vo edition.

† This case was not published.

‡ First case for Counsel's opinion in the matter of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier, p. 3, 8vo edition.

“ In sum :—

“ The accusation of rape of seduction cannot exist *.

“ The adultery has not been proved †.

“ It cannot be proved ‡.

“ Were it proven there existed neither accusation nor accuser §.

“ What remains, then, imputable to me ?

“ NOTHING.

“ Such is the criminal prosecution which, during five years past, has carried desolation into the bosom of two families, trembling even now at my rashness. Behold then, this prosecution which, for five whole years, has deprived me of my civil existence, * * * and has forced a young female, known by her sensibility, her benevolence, and all the good qualities upon which virtue germinates, to consume the best days of her youth under bolts and bars.

* * * * *

“ Such is this prosecution, which was tried in two hours, whilst the same judges have been deliberating during two whole days, whether they will or not grant

* According to the ordinances of 1639 and 1730, *rape of seduction* was admitted to exist, and could be punished only “between unmarried persons.”

† Evidence of this could be adduced only by witnesses either dependent, or challengeable, or accomplices.

‡ The facts had taken place in a foreign country.

§ We have already stated that the husband in his complaint did not mention adultery.

me a provisional release from prison. * * * *

Yes! two hours after the trial began, sentence was pronounced by four judges, the others being absent, condemning a man of quality to lose his head by the axe of the public executioner, and a young wife, so gentle, so interesting, so beloved in the very place where they were inflicting disgrace upon her, that her fate would have melted a tiger, to be torn like a blank leaf from the book of the living. * * * All this was done in two hours * * * and they are now deliberating above my head *."

Let us look elsewhere for what Mirabeau said of this

* First Case for Counsel's opinion, &c., page 32.

"What absurdities!—what horrors! O ye who thus trifle with men's lives—ye who do not turn pale at the sight of him you have condemned with such atrocious levity, did you think you should never behold me again? Had you then the promise of the Master of Destiny that His Providence would confirm your odious sentence, and ask back my life of me, before I could defend it against your sanguinary decrees? And you, kind reader, to whom even the most regular of criminal prosecutions is an object either of compassion or of indignation—you who have a horror of the useless profusion of executions, of the examples of atrocity and barbarity which they hold out to man, and of the dreadful right which men assume of putting their fellow-creatures to death—you to whom every fellow-man is a brother—only suppose, for an instant, that I am a different person; suppose that an obscure citizen, without a name, without fortune, without relations or friends, and, if I may be allowed to say it, less courageous and active, were in my situation—judge what would be his fate, what sentence would be pronounced, affecting his honour and life, since I have been condemned in such a manner!"—*Second Case for Counsel's opinion, &c., page 58.*

first published Case, a composition remarkable, at least—
for a very able defence of a very bad cause.

“ My Case is drawn up, and I did it in a single morning. I have had the happiness of being able to mention my errors with dignity, my co-accused with interest, and her husband with respect—though he is a poor automaton, acted upon by the passions of others. I have spoken with veneration of my father, with tenderness of my beloved sister, with moderation of man of my opponents; for recollect, that in my present situation, even the exercise of generosity is of advantage, because it conceals from the public what I am obliged to omit or disguise in my defence. For I do not want to save myself alone; how, therefore, can I disclose all? However, I am not dissatisfied with myself. I cannot send you a copy to-day, as I had hoped to do, because these people, forcing, as they do, to proceed document in hand, we are overloaded with work in an incredible manner. You shall receive it by the next post*.”

Up to this period the Marquis had approved of the steps taken by his son.

“ His pace is firm,” he wrote, “ and the post he occupies the most advantageous possible, except that his defences are puffed out with Latin, which is a crime against his judges, who do not understand that lan-

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated February 17th 1782.

guage. In the last accounts I received, I found him too bold. But since the arch of misalliance has occasioned in the hall of justice a reflux of fetid causes, like the waters of the Jordan in former times, and these men are heaped up together, and smoked with sulphur, in the guise of incense, they fancy that every petition must be a dedicatory epistle *. People are beginning to say that this singular mode of appealing from a sentence of death, is both bold and noble ; that the appellant has never yet had an opportunity of bringing his wine vat into a state of profitable fermentation ; and that, after all, the insolence of his petitions is the uniform belonging to the hazardous game he is playing †. At present, I see him in the saddle : he sits his horse well, and will have the real advantage, with regard to public opinion, of totally clearing his accomplice, which he wanted to do at any price. You have no idea of your nephew's power on great occasions : dangerous as it would be to gauge him then, and apply the measure to his every-day life, in the same degree may you depend upon him for being, in extreme cases, very superior to a wise man ‡."

The renewal of Mirabeau's imprisonment rendered

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 22d 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated April 6th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 1st 1782.

fresh interrogations necessary. He now maintained that French judges were not competent to take evidence of facts which had occurred in foreign countries (Switzerland and Holland). Offers of compromise were again made to him *, but he rejected them, being determined, as he said, before he listened to any terms, to obtain a provisional release, which was not granted to him, from the effect of a partiality of which he bitterly complained, and which, independently of the evidence adduced in the published cases †, is also mentioned in one of the Bailli's letters.

“ I hear that the Procureur du Roi has appealed. I have a copy of the interrogatories ; and I perceive that Honoré can teach his advocate a good deal—for those vile venders of words have nothing in their mouths but

* On this occasion he said, “ My enemies, persuaded that one of their victims cannot escape without the other, dare not make peace, nor declare war.”—*Second Case, &c.*, p. 38 of the 8vo edition.

† “ It was necessary the case should be tried in a little town, of which M. de Monnier seems to be the sovereign, by four men, two of whom, relatives of my adverse party, were also his attorneys, his devoted servants, his counsel, and in strict dependence upon him. It was necessary, in fine, that the informations which were to serve as the basis of the judgments, decrees, and revision of the proceedings, should be taken by a cruel and mortal enemy.”—*Third Case, &c.*, p. 33.

“ They made haste to try, condemn, and immolate me, and the success of their base conspiracy has not even freed me from their insults. They have not kept up even the most simple appearances. Their confederacy is known, public, and acknowledged, and their intimacy with the parties scandalously evident . . . and yet they talk of my boldness.”—*Ibid*, p. 39.

what is insinuated into their ears — and that he defends himself like green wood against the fire. But I likewise perceive that all is corrupt, and this makes me tremble, although he has found out the secret of denying every thing, and rendering the crime improbable, which may be of great use to him here *.”

Meanwhile, the Court declared, by an interlocutory judgment, its own competency to take cognisance of facts which had occurred out of the kingdom. The confrontation of the accused with the native witnesses was now about to take place, and Mirabeau was preparing himself for it. He wrote on this occasion as follows :—

“The truly formidable statement, if I am forced to make it, will be that concerning the confrontation †.”

This confrontation was ordered by a judgment delivered on the 21st of February. Mirabeau thus mentions it :—

“I have this day undergone a confrontation of ten hours, with only two witnesses, whom, thank God ! I have made pay dearly for the enjoyment ‡.”

The Bailli expresses himself in the same sense.

“He has just been twisting about, at a confrontation, the most ocular witnesses, and making them contra-

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 26th 1782.

† Unpublished letter, already quoted, from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated February 17th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 5th 1782.

dict themselves, though they had been well tutored and crammed for the occasion *.

Mirabeau, at the same time, was at work with the Council of Neufchatel, which notwithstanding the presence and exertion of the public prosecutor, Sombarde, who had gone thither on purpose, commanded the witnesses of their jurisdiction not to answer concerning offences committed within the territory of that state †."

The Marquis's letters, from which we have just extracted, had preceded the publication, or, at all events, the reception of Mirabeau's first Case; but this production, under Madame du Pailly's comments, greatly displeased this fickle-minded parent.

"I recognise," wrote Mirabeau, "the harpy whose impure breath poisons every thing. My father is furious against the case, and pretends that a second will prove his death. But none of my counsel will answer for my success unless every defence is published, because the prosecution, if it be well-founded in law, is not so in the public opinion, and it is this which necessitates the publication of my Cases; for what with the ignorance of the first judges, the very notorious prejudices of the present judges, and the intrigues of the adverse parties, it is certain that they would gladly

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 10th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated March 7th 1782.

avail themselves of *public opinion* to condemn us in darkness, if we did not ourselves light the lamps. We are here deprived of every thing and deserted; not a relative appears to take our part; *alone against all* is our motto. And yet we are advised to give ourselves up, by our silence, to all that intrigue and subornation may raise against us. We possess nothing but our pen, and yet they would destroy it. If you knew from how many manœuvres the fear of these published Cases has saved us, you would admit the propriety of sending forth to the public a simple essay which, without driving our enemies to despair, might keep our judges in awe *. You might have dispensed with your round-

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated March 21st 1782.

"Is it true that they are astonished at the energy of my complaints, or that they disapproved of them? Have I preferred any that were not well-founded? Can I be accused of having struck in the dark? No:—I have proclaimed aloud the names of my accusers. They dare to blame me for even my candour, and my firmness. I believe it:—they would fain reduce me to their own base level; they would fain see me have recourse to weapons the use of which is so familiar to them that they have no fear of being eclipsed in their skill. For my own part, I have only one line of conduct to oppose to so much manœuvring, to so many secret denunciations which have more than once placed me in jeopardy:—this is to give the utmost publicity to my defence. The proceedings and manuscript statements buried in the court offices, are easily put on one side, and still more easily forgotten; it is therefore to the broad light of day that crimes and calumnies ought to be exposed. It is to the public that respect paid to persons, hidden connivance, secret subornation, and annoyances in detail, should be denounced. Then, to be pru-

about way of making known to me my father's borrowed opinion of my case, for he has written to me the most unreasonable and harshest things. Surely, whoever asserts that this composition 'is evidently dedicated to libertines,' must have read it in a singular manner. I think that the picture I have drawn of my captivity at Vincennes, may not have pleased him who kept me there so long. But I doubt that it will appear badly written to many others, and I imagine that in this statement, I have confessed evil enough of myself to be allowed an attempt to move people by my misfortunes. I thought that you would explain to me this inconceivable fit of ill-humour in my father. I believe that a certain person has made him dread my success; and I do not think it possible to experience a harshness more cruel than this which occurs at a time when I am so greatly in want of assistance, and am so bitterly opposed, being obliged to struggle single-handed against all my adversaries; and when—thanks to the fury whom fate has let loose upon our house for its downfall—the appeal which alone ought to occupy my mind is

dent will not prove sufficient to dispense with being just; then, the voice of honest people may compensate for the imperfection of the laws, and maintain within the bounds of equity those who hold any portion of the public authority, and who, like all other men, are accessible to passion. * * * *

It became necessary, therefore, that I should challenge or change the public opinion, since my enemies constantly attest the notoriety they have produced.—*Third Case for Counsel's opinion, &c.* page 28.

the matter that costs me the least time and exertion *. What rage!—What a dread have they of my gaining so necessary a victory, and giving the public a better opinion of me than they have attempted to give! All this may prove highly dangerous, by showing me as I am,—that is to say, completely abandoned, and having no worse enemies than in the bosom of my own family †.

“I really do not at all see the drift of your arguments. What!—because I considered myself sure, it was not necessary to publish a defence! What a conclusion! Do, pray, consider the infernal cabal against me, and the necessity of striking rascals and prejudiced judges with awe. And then you say, I have been a little too fast. You, a hundred leagues off, are really singular in your judgments; the space between us diminishes objects, and makes their particular details disappear; you, therefore, surely cannot tell what they should do who are acting upon the spot, and on close inspection. We require to be supported, and not blamed—caressed, and not bitten; but with the most honest people in the world, the absent are always wrong. Such is human nature ‡.”

At the same time, the Marquis wrote—

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated March 28th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated April 2nd 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated April 4th 1782.

“ You have no idea of what he terms his defences. I never found him so mad. He has humiliated the witnesses, exasperated the judges, insulted everybody, and really fancies himself innocent, oppressed, moderate, and magnanimous—in a word, it is bedlam broken loose *.”

Mirabeau, meanwhile, persisted in pursuing the line he had traced out.

“ It is possible you do not know, but my father knows, that judges neither can nor ought to decide like ordinary men ; that they can pronounce only as judges ; that facts, said to be the most notorious, are nothing to them, unless legally proved ; that, therefore, it matters little whether ‘ the facts are too well known,’ which you do not cease repeating, but it matters much that they should not be *proven* ; and this is the reason why, without you, in spite of you, and against your opinion, we have gained almost every

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 8th 1782. Three days subsequently, the Marquis wrote—

“ The Case he has published has filled every one with indignation. It has been found so insolent, that it has done him irreparable injury. He had already inspired terror and horror—now the feeling towards him is hatred, so far as, in this place, I can come to any correct conclusion. When I remonstrate, it is considered an offence: I therefore leave them to their infallibility. It is a great annoyance to me to acknowledge the receipt of their packets ; and, certainly, I shall have nothing to do with the business, either by myself, or through others.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated April 11th 1782.*

incidental point we have undertaken. What prejudice can, therefore, be entertained against our mode of defence, which has hitherto been so successful, and is so highly praised, boasted of, and strongly seconded by the Ruffey family, who have the greatest stake in the business, and therefore ought to be the most indisposed against me, and, consequently, the most difficult to satisfy *. Excuse me, if I return candour for candour. Truly, I can find in yours nothing but fresh reasons for loving and esteeming you ; but my heart is so full, so wounded, so discontented, that it must overflow into your bosom, always ready to console me, and in which I ever find affection and kindness †."

The appeal from the decree, granting a provisional release, was prosecuted at Besançon, and Mirabeau published a second Case, addressed less to the attention of the judges than constituting an appeal to public opinion.

"Only imagine that the Case is published on the printer's account; whom I pay for the reserved copies only. The others are eagerly purchased by the public ‡."

In this second Case, Mirabeau explains that his escape from the castle of Joux was quite independent of the connexion he is accused of having formed with Madame

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated April 7th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, already quoted, dated April 11th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated April 23rd 1782.

de Monnier,—the sole cause of it being the persecutions of the Commandant St. Mauris, who now, as formerly, was kind face to face, and hostile behind his back *. On this occasion, he transcribes the eloquent letters we have already given. He exposes the violence which Madame de Valdahon exercised towards her father, in order to force him to become a civil party in this suit. He shows, by textual quotations, and the most able arguments, that the law does not acknowledge and punish “rape of seduction,” except between “unmarried persons.” He quotes, discusses, and refutes the evidence received. He inserts the prohibition of the magistrates of Neufchatel. He returns to the charge of “rape of seduction ;” and he comments also upon that of adultery, a private offence, the denunciation of which belongs only to the husband, who nevertheless, *solus genialis tori vindex*, is mute on the present occasion. He examines the twenty-three depositions invoked out of the ninety-one formerly taken

* “I make all the advances to M. de St. Mauris. Every day he sent to know how I was, and I returned this civility. His confrontation, far from being stormy, was full of mutual civility, and he embraced me when he went away. * * * *

“This kiss, a pledge of new treachery, announced to me his infamous conduct in giving one of my letters to compare it with the one in the proceedings!”—*Third Case for Counsel's opinion*, &c. p. 81. 8vo edition.

The reader may remember that the letter “in the proceedings” had been furnished by this same St. Mauris, who, in March 1777, had received it from Mademoiselle Barbaud.

during the informations ; and he disposes of fourteen, by which he deprives the accusation of all its resources. Taking the nine other depositions, he sets aside six, which are unconnected, vague, and contradictory ; and he rejects the three others, because they emanate from servants of the accuser. After the most energetic arguments, he comes to forms of conciliation ; speaking, nevertheless, of his chances in appeal with a confidence which he, perhaps, really felt at the same time that he expressed it in the interest of his cause *.

* If I wished to consume my life in lawsuits, I have not the slightest doubt, that if I might bring an action against my first judges, and take vengeance upon them for their atrocious sentence against me, which they rendered with the most scandalous precipitancy, whilst, at present, I have been left more than two months in the most horrible, filthy, indecent, and unwholesome prison, to present a justification which might have been made in a fortnight. So hasty a despotism formerly, so infamous a delay, and so criminal partiality now, would, no doubt, incur an exemplary punishment, if I followed up the case with just indignation, and my usual burning activity. But what should I gain by this eternal enmity ? All these men have proved themselves rather weak than corrupt, with the exception of Sombarde, the prevaricator. With him alone will I wage war, both as a man and a citizen. As for the others, I absolve them so far as lays in my power. * * * * * What is more honourable than indulgence, even towards those who might justify the whole world in showing them none ? I am far, alas ! from being of this number. My fiery and culpable youth has cost me dear ; it has also cost others a great deal, and I cannot excuse in myself this misfortune, as I could do it if it were only personal to myself."—*Second Case for Counsel's opinion*, &c., p. 210. 8vo edition.

The necessity of not exceeding our limits, forces us, to our great

Notwithstanding Mirabeau's precautions of style in this second publication, it increased his father's displeasure.

“ His second eruption has not been at all successful, but has completely broken the neck of this horrible madman *.”

The Bailli was of a different opinion.

“ I perceive that I am a better judge than you of what is passing under your very nose. You yourself admitted, in the beginning, that to your great surprise the Case of the *infallible* had been a very successful publication, and that at Paris it was praised. Now do you not see the bottom of things?—did you believe that people would examine them as casuists?—and because they concerned us and ours, was it necessary that what was should not be?—and that a very ordinary circumstance should be converted into an unparalleled monstrosity, and lead to a moral upon which to theorise and to dogmatise? Do you not know Paris—that gulf of men, and manners, and ideas, promiscuously disgraceful and corrupt †? Know you not

regret, to suppress this admirable peroration, of which, however, we shall translate a portion, when we give an account of Mirabeau's views and labours, on the formation of courts of justice, on the theory of penal laws, and on proceedings in criminal matters, &c.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated April 26th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 20th 1782.

that the Parisian dregs and filth which soil the walls of this vast manufactory of follies and crimes, have no greater styptic for mankind than the torpor in which the life that is led there keeps the heart*? Who in that infamous Babylon, where every thing scandalous in such an affair, is soldered, cicatrised, and consolidated, is not, either by deed or will, guilty of all that is essentially blameable in the conduct of the *infallible*? It is true that he has given it more *éclat*; but the ground work of the thing is the same: adultery, rape, and seduction, supposing him to be guilty of all three, though he is guilty of one only, form the history of almost all men; in his case there is only a noisy publicity in addition†."

Alas! the Bailli was right. It is on account of the "noisy publicity in addition," that stains of immorality have tarnished the memory of Mirabeau, who did no worse than thousands of other men of whom posterity has taken no notice, because the powers of mighty genius did not bring their errors and misfortunes into notice.

Let us here point out another contrast between the letters of the two brothers. In one of the same date as that whence we extracted the above passage, the Marquis wrote as follows—

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated September 11th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated April 6th 1782.

“I have told you every thing about him, and perhaps too much ; for it would have been sufficient had I said ‘He is mad.’ But the syncopations and subdivisions of his madness are infinite in detail. The truth is, he has supplied weapons against himself to all sorts of persons. The quantity of folly and of atrocity that he has committed to paper is astounding ; and as he has inspired a general terror,—very ill-founded in my judgment, so far as regards his disposition, but not so with reference to his aptitude at inventing, affirming, and placing every thing in jeopardy,—he has acted with his usual imprudence—accusing one, abusing another, writing every thing against every body. Yet, at bottom, this man who has only the fence of Satan, but not his claws, has not a farthing’s worth of malignancy ; but he has a treasure of childishness and folly *.”

The event did not correspond with Mirabeau’s expectations : his demand of provisional release was rejected by the Chamber of the Tournelle in the Besançon parliament. Three days after, Mirabeau appealed from the whole procedure, to the Great Chamber ; and his principal argument for quashing it,—an argument which until then he had kept secret,—was founded upon the relationship between the Marquis of Monnier and the public prosecutor Sombarde, who had shown himself so partial and so vindictive.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau dated April 26th 1782.

"Here am I, then, in prison for a month longer, but it is almost impossible for the proceedings not to be quashed by the middle of June *."

But he intended to go much further than this appeal.

"I will tell you, and you alone, that as soon as I am liberated, which they cannot possibly refuse to do, if the proceedings are quashed, I shall set out for Paris and solicit the removal of the cause to another parliament, this being really tainted with partiality †."

The check received from the chamber of the Tour-nelle, determined the Marquis of Mirabeau to interfere and despatch his son-in-law, M. du Saillant, "not to defend the prisoner, and make common cause with him, but to negociate a compromise;" to which the courageous prisoner replied, that the sight of the scaffold opposite to his window should not induce him to accept proposals in prison ‡.

Who would not take a strong interest in Mirabeau's fate, on reading this declaration? During the most

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated May 9th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 14th 1782. Mirabeau had already, in another letter, explained himself on this subject.

"The vindictiveness and animosity of the parliamentary cabal are at their climax. Desbirens could not even obtain access to the Procureur Général, and the judges drily told him that 'they were relations.'"—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Vitry, dated April 23rd 1782, page 193.*

‡ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Vitry, page 196.

valuable years of his life, he had been deprived of freedom, of which he had at last just caught a glimpse, after forty-two months of rigorous confinement in the most frightful prison in the kingdom. Having reached the age of thirty-three years, he had received his father's pardon, and was secure from the prosecution of the Marquis of Monnier, who stood upon the brink of the grave, as well as from that of the public prosecutor, kept in check by the influence of the Marquis of Mirabeau. Enjoying freedom and quiet for the first time in his life, nothing remained for him to do but to proceed with the work of his own regeneration. He had now no leisure for running after adventures; and not only was he cured of the passion which had led to his worst faults and misfortunes, but he was eternally separated from the object of that passion, which was extinguished by supposed acts of infidelity of which he thought himself certain, and which the burning jealousy, natural to his character, would never allow him to overlook. Any other man, perhaps, would have yielded to so many powerful reasons, and have suffered himself to be pardoned at the expense of his co-accused. But such was not Mirabeau's nature : he determined, at all risks, to obtain his own acquittal together with that of his accomplice. He accordingly placed his life in the power of the vindictive and prejudiced judges who, in his absence, had condemned him to the capital punishment. He had now already passed five months in an

unhealthy dungeon * ; he was sick, surcharged with work, deprived of all pecuniary resources, and his heart corroded with "uneasiness, care, and avenging repentance †." His name was again brought before the public by a second trial, the cause of which had led to his severest misfortunes, and was now likely to endanger all his future prospects. His adversaries harassed him with chicanery, and loaded him with insult. His family had abandoned him, and disavowed his acts. . . . But nothing could move him : his firmness and confidence remained unshaken, and adversity seemed to have reset his powerful genius in a stronger frame.

Nevertheless, his father pursued the plan he had formed.

"Under the circumstances of the case, I am about to despatch du Saillant seriously to negotiate, and finally bring about a compromise. I had always refused his kind offices, in consequence of the affirmation and boasting of those people ; and, mad as I thought

* "This prison is dreadful. I am surrounded by men with fever ; besides being placed in the most fetid filth, and in such close quarters, that it is impossible to write a single line with a cool head, or to confer with my counsel a quarter of an hour without witnesses." *First Case for Counsel's opinion*, &c., page 34, 8vo edition. In another part of the same work, he mentions "the stinking and tumultuous place in which he is writing," (page 40) "in the midst of smugglers, thieves, and deserters, whose bellows drive away sleep from the weary eyelids of their neighbours," (page 134).

† Ibid. p. 9, 8vo edition.

them, I was waiting for the first attempt, because I considered that a sleep-walker ought not to be awaked and assisted whilst labouring under the fit ; and I was unwilling to incur additional expense, having already had so many wounds inflicted upon my purse, besides notoriety, and other devouring things. But Providence will have it so, and necessity drags me along. Du Saillant is prudent, and a man of business ; he well knows the character of his brother-in-law, and will not be brought over by specious arguments to the fellow's way of thinking. He positively declares that he will never become a solicitor in such a disgraceful business ; but he will go solely to treat with the parties, who have mutually and equally lost their way.

“ The worst for Honoré, in the midst of this, is that everybody thinks him incurably mad, and more so now than ever. They have no doubt that he is trying to do his best, in a matter of such vital importance to himself, they perceiving him in full swing ; and discredit has reached its climax. * * * *

“ I have forbidden any further publications, on pain of being cast off entirely ; but they will obey me just as they have done already *.”

Mirabeau, however, was not a man to yield without resistance.

“ I did think and I still think that my father's plan

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 15th 1782.

would spoil and will yet spoil all. Such is my opinion, which is free ; and I have too deep a stake in the business to justify their forcing me out of my own measures, and taking upon themselves the responsibility of what may ensue*.”

The Marquis, however, persisted in acting according to his own view of the case.

“ Our madman, who had upon his pate the loss of his incidents †, is again beginning to mistake his farthing rushlights for suns. Du Saillant takes with him the strongest letters to all influential persons connected with that country ; at the same time all persons of sense, in every condition, assure him that his brother-in-law has laid his head upon the block, and cannot escape unless he remodels the parliament. The whole country, which sees his madness and crimes, insulted and exasperated by the haughtiness and sarcasms of

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated May 19th 1782.

† Mirabeau was not at all disheartened at this, if we may judge from the following passage in a letter dated May 22nd, which he wrote to his sister. He repeated part of the same passage in a letter written next day to Vitry, and published in page 231 of his collection.

“ If you know your brother well, you would be aware that he is never impatient under great difficulties. ‘ We must never be angry with things,’ said Marcus Aurelius, ‘ for it matters nothing at all to them.’ Thus I am often indignant at persons, but things find me always resolute. However, the loss of this incident has nothing to grieve me except the prolongation of my confinement, for my health has no need of it ; but numerous as you are, none of you will succeed in making me tremble.”

this rash fellow, has sworn to make a memorable example of him. The case always appeared to the lawyers and criminalists a bad one ; but he does not cease repeating that they are a set of fools. When he published his first Case, I wrote to him that any future publication would be stabbing me to the heart. Thereupon, he uttered much verbiage, and immediately published twenty opinions of counsel, together with explanations and expositions. Lastly, after having seen his second Case, checkered with rhapsodies picked up right and left, and having already determined to send Du Saillant, I wrote to Honoré that, at length, I was going to save him ; but that thenceforward I desired he would publish nothing until I had seen the manuscript.

“ This I wrote at Du Saillant’s request, as he was anxious his brother-in-law should know nothing of his journey, for fear of the usual boasting, and lest also Honoré should further endanger his own cause. His reply was, that the consequences must fall upon his own shoulders, though he would sacrifice all to obedience ; but that he could not prevent his counsel from publishing their opinions, and that I should receive, by the next post, his third Case. Now, I would not swear that this man did not really think, with good faith, that he was obeying my instructions literally *.”

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 31st 1782. From these explanations, it is easy to imagine that the Marquis impeded as much as possible the circulation

Mirabeau, as we find by the Marquis's letter, had just published his third Case, principally directed against the public prosecutor Sombarde, who, from the very beginning, had performed the duties of Procureur da Roi, and instead of confining himself to the severe but impartial dignity of the magistrate, had never ceased displaying towards Mirabeau, "in defiance of all decency and all rule*," the vindictiveness of personal hatred. This animosity, disgusting in itself, became highly criminal from the fact that Sombarde was related, within the prohibited degree, to the Marquis of Monnier, the complainant in the prosecution. This composition was full of power and eloquence. The author himself said of it: "if this be not eloquence unknown in these enslaved times, I know not what that gift of heaven is, so seducing and so rare †."

He spoke of it to his sister in more humble terms.

"You must before this have received my third Case, the sole object of which is to rouse the indignation

of these publications. It was not without the greatest difficulty that the friends of Mirabeau succeeded in distributing these Cases, which he sent to them privately. Such readers as may feel interested in the particulars, may find them at great length in Vitry's collection.

* Third Case for Counsel's opinion, &c., page 12.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Vitry, dated May 12th 1782, page 200. It was by mistake that M. Villemain (*Cours de Littérature Française*, Part III. page 21) applied this saying of Mirabeau's to the cases published in the following year, pending the suit in preparation between the Count and Countess of Mirabeau.

which Sombarde's prevarication deserves; this man, for the purpose of crushing me, having concealed his relationship to the Marquis of Monnier. I know what people here think of this production, or rather what they say of it. But what is your opinion? Do you think it the work of a man discouraged, of a combatant upon his last legs, who requires the assistance necessary to his weakness?"

He also continued to oppose the negociation with which his father wanted to bring the matter to a conclusion.

"I am writing to my father, and I must believe myself well supported in principle, and quite free from reproach, to write as I am doing. You may well suppose that I know what to think of the statements I have published, and the epithets that may be applied to them. The best informed advocates have told me not less than a hundred times, that my cause had been defended in a very superior manner * * *.

"I have told my father, and I repeat to you that no one, before God and man, has a right to interfere in my cause, against my will, contrary to my own opinion, and without my own consent. In this firm conviction, I tell you that I will have no compromise, unless the proceedings are set aside. I will sign none which does not include my unqualified absolution, that of Madame de Monnier, the restitution of her dower, an annuity settled on her for life, and the payment by the opposite

party of all my expenses in this suit. Lastly, I reserve to myself the free right of action against Sombarde ; that of printing and placarding the decree setting aside the judgment, and a guarantee against any subsequent prosecution by the law officers of the crown*."

The Marquis, on the other hand, had very different intentions.

"I have already informed you," he wrote, "of Du Saillant's departure. The gentleman at the other place there, pretends that his plan is spoiled and that he is very angry. He will, perhaps, be so in earnest, for his brother-in law's plan and instructions are to do, in my name and his own, quite the reverse of what has been done hitherto. His third publication, whilst it seeks to excuse, is more haughty and insulting than the two former. The fellow has placed his foot upon the heels of every other person ; and in truth, as M. de St. Mauris, and M. Petit†, are both military men,

* Letters from Mirabeau to M. du Saillant, dated June 6th 1782. Vitry's collection, page 238, *et seq.* We must here call to the reader's attention, without repeating it, a letter to Boucher, dated October 5th 1779, which we have already quoted, proving how long before the present period, Mirabeau had come to this determination, in which he persevered with so much constancy and courage.

† M. de St. Mauris, commandant of the castle, and M. Petit, formerly in the body guard, and a knight of St. Louis, were severely commented upon in the second and third Cases, because the former had intrigued pretty openly, and from hatred given up as written evidence, a letter which Mirabeau had formerly sent through a

I know not what they would do to him, if he were once released *. As for the gentleman himself, he is a walking dreamer, speaking like a book, determined to have everything but leaving nothing; taking everything, but seizing nothing; is neither himself nor another, but a firebrand, a faggot, a sky-rocket, a shadow, a madman, noise, wind, a puff, and nothing more†. He is the magpie of wits, and the joy of public places. He has discernment, nevertheless, by means of which, when he finds every thing good, he feeds upon it in preference. He is an incredible tool‡."

Unfortunately, the prejudices of the Marquis again reached the Bailli.

"This unhappy madman, in the end, will have done nothing but make pap for the devil. He has sent me a printed Case, which, for insolence and vapouring, is the most extraordinary thing I ever read; and, to tell

faithless emissary to Madame de Monnier; and the latter had made an obscene and lying deposition very injurious to the two accused parties. St. Mauris and Petit had announced plans of vengeance to be carried into execution the moment the prisoner was released.

"And ought I to spare a St. Mauris and a Petit, when to the most glaring perjury they add the most atrocious threats, the most furious insults?"—*Third case for Counsel's opinion, &c., page 35.*

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 17th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 12th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 21st 1782.

you the truth, if he saves his head in this business, I am alarmed at the thoughts of the race that such a man would beget. I candidly tell you, that if I had to do with him, I would, if possible, assist him out of this scrape only to shut him up once more at Vincennes for life; for if age and the different inflictions he has undergone, cannot change him, there is no hope left *."

Such language from the Bailli is no doubt singular; but the impressions that led to such bitterness, being founded upon passing prejudice, and not upon inveterate aversion, he altered his opinion the moment he was better informed.

We continue to extract from his letters, even though we anticipate dates, because these letters appear to give the true character of Mirabeau's situation and defence.

"He has spoken from his prison with an energy which, I confess appears insolent, but it is because people will no longer allow of energy except against the Holy Trinity. Besides, he attacked those vile law nobles, who are as perverse as they are stupid †, which is saying

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 10th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 12th 1782. The Marquis of Mirabeau's evidence also proves the partiality of the officers of justice, and he relates, concerning one of the principal, an anecdote which we here insert.

"This Procureur-general is so vindictive, and at the same time so stupid and ignorant, that no one dared to trust him by letters of recommendation. I am told that he once demanded a decree

a great deal, and whose imprudent partiality would have brought a cooler head than his to the block. Then again, with reference to the principal business which is here (in Provence), it is well that he carried it with so high a hand towards his adversaries, because he thereby showed that he had laid down the law to them, and not entered into a mean compromise, for money, as they try to persuade people here*. As for the gentleman's head, be assured that he defended it

against the players, because in the piece called 'Le Festin de Pierre,' they had a capon served up in the play, on a day when meat was prohibited."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 6th 1782.*

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 3rd 1782. A few days previously, Mirabeau had expressed the same thing.

"Be assured that I saw further than any body, and best understood my true interests when, at Pontarlier, I said: 'The more energy, and even audacity I show in defending myself in this business, the more I shall diminish the difficulties in Provence.' For, in fact, who will dare to assert judicially, that I was not in the right three times over, in this prosecution, in which I so sifted both the adverse party and the judges, and where nevertheless I dictated the law?"—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated November 17th 1782.*

Vitry, to whom Mirabeau, by the same post, wrote the very same things often expressed in the same terms, has inserted the passage in his collection, page 283. We must also add that subsequently Mirabeau took care, as he had prepared to do, to plume himself upon the tone of his defence in Franche-Comté. Accordingly, in Provence, people said: 'he pursued with, perhaps, unexampled energy, accuser, counsel, witnesses, procedure, and first judges.'—*Observations for the Count of Mirabeau, &c., p. 33.*

well, for the passions of his adversaries had led them into such a scrape, that they would have found great difficulty in getting out of it, if the compromise had not come to their assistance; having sprung from the dunghill, thanks to Du Saillant, like a pumpkin or a farmer general of the revenue*. I perceive that passion had sufficiently blinded his adversaries to make them take bad measures, whilst he took good ones. What would you have him do? Was it right that he should supplicate persons who had not the shadow of a personal grievance to complain of, but whom sordid interest led to desire his ruin, and that of his co-accused? Was he to desert his appeal, when he was certain that no legal evidence could be produced against him?—when he was assured of the illegality of the proceedings which had been conducted by a relation within the prohibited degree? Believe me, I have talked of this affair with every body here, and nobody thinks as you do, that ‘this man will again come hither to present to us the brow of final impenitence, and will never return to good !’”

Such was the Bailli's language; but the Marquis did not change his. Let us turn to his letters.

“He who would make him prudent would render

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 23rd 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated December 30th 1782.

him stupid ; but he is not likely to be either. Passions—he has none, nor has he a tendency to any ; pretensions—he has them all, because pride is his very life, and is as natural to him as his head or his arm ; but all is in infancy with him, and he has the parts of a fool *.” He is a rogue and a liar from habit and by nature ; but these are the weapons of weakness, as the claw is the weapon of the cat. He is presumptuous, because he never aims straight, nor is he able to aim straight, because pride and weakness cannot form a right angle. Put all this together, and embroider it with eloquence, facility, perspicuity—with every thing, in short, that dazzles the multitude, who walk upon the all-fours of their good sense, but stand gaping when raised upon two legs †. All sensible people perceive that he is mad ; but they hold their tongue, and stand on one side to let him pass, because they think him dangerous ; and on all occasions, he does nothing but display madness and folly, like a clock, which, when taken to pieces, does not know what it makes nor what it strikes ‡.

“ Let us first establish that a man’s nature cannot be changed. But this is no embarrassment to that man,

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 18th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 23rd 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 27th 1782.

for he has no nature. He has a sort of turbulent sensibility which renders him good, and not bad ; though, at bottom, he has no goodness, not even towards himself—for he treats himself like a dog or a horse. However, he perhaps requires to knock himself about in this manner, lest his sanguineous exuberance should suffocate him. And let us be just ; there are, in his writings, a great deal of physical impulse*. He writes what he pleases, and, perhaps, thinks some part of what he writes. To respect nothing is a sure weapon, for everybody makes way for him †."

"He is always the same, in turbulent uneasiness, and complete nullity ; for he is but a fog—he is Ixion copulating with a cloud—he is noise, and wind, and nothing ‡.

"It is always the same thing. All that he says is false—all that he sees, illusory—all that he writes, stolen. With reference to the latter defect, his unhappy propensity injures him, for he can write a letter very well, and with inconceivable rapidity, whereas what he steals is not half so good §."

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated July 1st 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated July 12th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated August 12th 1782.

§ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated August 20th 1782.

We must admit that, among so many observations, partly true and partly false, thrown out from mere impulse by the fickle and instantly impressible mind of the Marquis, this last sally is strikingly correct ; for it is true, that Mirabeau, who knew, and could do more than any other man, was too often inclined to borrow from others, instead of writing from his own thoughts, and to prepare and embellish the labour of others upon subjects which he would have handled much better without any assistance. We shall show in another part of this work the real claims of those pretended auxiliaries, who have boasted of being the architects of Mirabeau's fame, and not one of whom, after his death, could find talent enough to bring himself into notice.

Whilst the Marquis was thus firing his squibs against his son, the Pontarlier business drew towards a close.

“ Du Saillant finds every thing easy for the compromise, having taken very strong letters with him ; but there are still two individuals to overcome, Madame de Valdahon, and Honoré. The latter writes to me in an insolent style, but with a degree of respect, as you foolishly call it, that would put you in a towering passion. I shall not answer his letter, and all is said. If he holds out, I shall give him up. But what can be done with him ?—for Linguet is free, and De Sade about to become so †.”

* Linguet had been confined for some time in the Bastille, when he was liberated in 1782, and exiled to Rhetel. De Sade was then

The compromise was at length agreed to.

"Du Saillant, with the signatures attached on his side, immediately set out for Dijon, whence he brought back with him the President de Ruffey and his son *."

Further, the mediator's opinion had become more favourable to Mirabeau's line of conduct.

"Your husband will tell you, whether, according to his conscientious belief, the case could have been better defended; whether his opinion of it has not greatly changed since he has inspected it closer; and whether I am as mad as cowards, cheats and fools do not cease assuring my father that I am. I refer you to your husband's veracity, and he was not a little prejudiced †."

This impression upon Du Saillant appears at last to have reached his father-in-law; for after writing on the 17th of June: "He will ruin himself; Providence is leading him to his punishment, and he will belie Du Saillant. The most fortunate thing that could happen

at the donjon of Vincennes, whence he was removed to the Bastille. He did not obtain his release till 1790. Let us here observe, that this is the third time the Marquis of Mirabeau draws a parallel between his son and De Sade.—In the Letters from Vincennes, vol. ii. p. 3, and vol. iii. pp. 113, 403, and 409, the reader may see what Mirabeau, who assuredly had no knowledge of his father's parallel, said of the Marquis de Sade.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 21st 1782.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated June 20th 1782.

indeed to him would be to make him pass for a man stricken with mental aberration, as he is *;" he wrote to his brother two days after :

" Your nephew yielded with a good grace. You have no idea of the power of this man when he is in presence ; for I am well informed, and I know it is generally supposed that, with all his folly, he would have brought about a compromise without the assistance of Du Saillant, and perhaps—it is said, certainly—upon much more advantageous terms †. And in fact, it is very possible that those devilish Cases ‡ have opened for him the trench in which this affair will be buried, and that they will be of use to him elsewhere."

This, no doubt, is a strong admission from the Marquis ; and it proves what the Bailli had already perceived, that Mirabeau, independently of the suggestions of his ardent mind, arising from the bitter feelings produced by an exaggerated and atrocious condemnation, by the wants of his defence, and the interests of his co-accused, had looked forward to an

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 17th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 19th 1782.

‡ At a later period Mirabeau, who had often occasion to refer to those Cases, speaks thus :—

" Those Cases, which brought me many adherents and made me many enemies, drew upon me much censure and much praise, and placed before me many obstacles and many resources."—*Third Case for Counsel's opinion*, &c. p. 8.

ulterior object, and given his voice a power which made it reach Provence. Thus ten months subsequently, he exclaimed before the judges at Aix—

“I agreed to a compromise, but not until my enemies begged for mercy. If you have any doubts, read these Cases, then too celebrated *, which I was forced to publish in my defence. Examine the registers and archives of the courts of justice, search the reports of public trials, and try to find an accused who defended himself with the same energy! Read, and then say, if you dare, that entreaty and pity made my accuser withdraw his charge. I entered into a compromise—and why should I not? What had I to claim from my adverse party? Nothing but pecuniary damages;—and do you think that so sordid a motive could have induced me to prolong his torments and my own?—to prolong so scandalous a suit—so deplorable a public scandal †?”

Although, as we have just shown, the Marquis dismissed the prejudices he had conceived against a too bold system of defence, his heart was not softened towards his son, who was now afflicted and embarrassed by fresh severities.

“I have received an epistle from the gentleman; he begs I will become answerable for the sums advanced for him by his friends, who, as Du Saillant informs me,

* Letter already quoted, dated February 25th and December 3d 1782.

† Pleading pronounced by the Count of Mirabeau at the Audience of the Lieutenant-General, &c. March 20th 1783.

are very honest people, and have stripped themselves assist him. I have replied, as you may imagine up every point. I tell him I have no doubt that with r security he would yet make many points; but that it good only because I have lived sixty-seven years as honest man and am resolved to die such; that consequently I have no wish to mingle my engagements with his*.”

The reader may judge of the remainder of the letter by what Mirabeau says of it.

“ You will see, my dear sister, by my letter to my father, that I am far, very far, from being able assent to the favourable prognostics which your kind heart sends me. Mine is lacerated and its wound will never close. My father’s hatred and contempt are length evident: he shows them in their nakedness. His contempt is perhaps forced, but in that case his hatred is only the more violent. He wants to make those who will not betray my cause, ashamed of loving me. He has decided that no one can be my friend without roguery or folly. He confesses that he expects and wishes I shall entirely lose my uncle’s regard, that may the sooner be crushed. He announces my proscription for at least seven years, protests that he will never raise the interdict against me, and declares that I will make his will in consequence. At the present time, to hasten my ruin and prevent my obtaining

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau dated September 13th 1782.

success and acquiring reputation, he does all in his power to make me quit this place as a bankrupt, and refuses me even the smallest pecuniary assistance. I have neither income, nor appointment, nor charge, nor resources, and I have already disbursed 4,800 francs upon the future and uncertain price of my labours in prison. What can and ought I to do, except to forestall his decree and his prophesy by banishing myself for ever from my family and my country? Such resolutions are not made and executed without the heart breaking. . . . I cannot escape my destiny. Fear nothing however for my first feelings. I have consulted my uncle; this was my duty, and I greatly required it, for, I confess, I am unable at this moment to reflect or even to think *."

After considerable delay, the necessary consent and signatures were obtained. We shall not dwell upon this fact, nor upon that of the compromise itself, the text of the deed, and the commentary upon it being quite useless here: because the text is nothing but a development of the conditions imperatively demanded by Mirabeau †, and which we have already given; and

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 16th 1782.

† That is to say—the sentence of the 10th of May 1778 was quashed. The Marquis and Marchioness of Monnier were separated from bed, and board, and in property; the dower of the latter was returned and a further life annuity of twelve thousand francs secured to her,—but on express condition that she should reside in a convent until her husband's demise. The Marquis of Monnier died eight months after this termination of the suit. Peuchet has

because the commentary offers no interest, and we shall have occasion to say a few words about the morality of the transaction, when we give the particulars of the suit for a separation carried on at Aix, in which an attempt was made to take advantage of the result of the proceedings at Pontarlier.

The transaction was definitively concluded August 14th 1782; "not without difficulty, as the tempers of all parties had been irritated*", and the attorneys, in despair at seeing their prey escape, attempted to throw oil upon the fire†. However, on the 14th all was terminated, and the wheel broken‡. The Count writes to me that he is at length released after a captivity of more than six months, and that he remained, during

given the text of the deed of compromise vol. ii. pp. 113, 114, 115, and 116. In commenting upon it, the author, in page 112, repeats, it is impossible to tell why, the libels which have most calumniated Mirabeau. On the other hand, Cadet Gassicourt says, p. 27 of the first edition and 21 of the second—

"The public prosecutor was silent, M. de Monnier paid the cost and damages, and Mirabeau, in *quiet possession of his mistress whom the same instrument restored to freedom*, laughed with her the clemency of injured husbands."

Here is a biographer truly well informed of the particulars of

—fine !!!

The letter inserted in Vitre's collec

four days, running about the streets of Pontarlier, and appearing every where, in order to shew St. Mauris, and Petit, and anybody else who might wish to speak to him, that they might easily find him, and that he was quite ready to grant them an audience. He adds that he is going to Neufchâtel, but will remain in Switzerland no longer than the time strictly necessary to secure the repayment of the sums which his friends Bourrier, and especially Michaud, have advanced to meet his expenses."

The Marquis of Mirabeau continued to refuse his son all pecuniary assistance. Mirabeau was in despair at this refusal, because it compelled him to fail in the duties imposed by delicacy and gratitude. He had no confidant but his sister, who was unable to assist him.

"Your brother will not be quite unhappy so long as he is sure that he retains a place in your affections. Alas! it will soon be the only one he has left, and he would deem himself fortunate if his name were erased from the book of life *."

His discouragement also appeared in another letter which he wrote to his sister, dated August 16th.

"Here I am free! . . . But what can I do with my freedom? Rejected by my father—forgotten, perhaps hated by my mother, because I attempted to serve her—dreaded by my uncle—waited for by my creditors,

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 22nd 1782.

not one of whom has been paid, although I was deprived of all I had in the world, under pretence of satisfying them—threatened by my wife, or by those who direct her—destitute of everything—having neither income, nor profession, nor credit. . . . Ah! God grant that my enemies may not be so cowardly as they are perverse—that they will realise my hopes—that they will come upon the green sward where I am prepared to meet them! . . . But, dear sister, they will not come. . . . If I went to fetch them, I should be called a bully,—perhaps, a murderer! And yet I am sadly in want of being run through the body*.”

A few days after writing the above, he informed his uncle that “ he was desirous a pension should be settled upon him, and he would leave France never to return†. He even added that he would take another name if you wished it‡.”

“ If this man will really make up his mind to leave the kingdom, in truth it will be doing us a great service; for he will never be good for anything§.”

All this did not move the Marquis.

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant dated August 16th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabe dated August 26th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated September 7th 1782.

§ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated September 10th 1782.

"He has written the same thing to me, on the subject of his residing with a pension in a corner. But these are crotchets that really whirl through his brain, or which he affects. Neither he nor others can be aware of what passes by puffs in that enormous waste; and the most dangerous part of it is that he assumes that fire of temper, as often as he feels it in reality *."

Soon afterwards, the Marquis became of a different opinion. He interpreted, in his own way, Mirabeau's lengthened stay at Neufchâtel, where he was in treaty for the sale of his manuscripts.

"I think you are freed from the burthen imposed upon you by yourself and me,—by yourself from goodness of heart, by me from duty and the perplexity I should have been in, no doubt, in a month or two, to fix a place of residence for that wretch, and thereby supply him with materials for a new manifest, and a fresh catastrophe. This man will surely not proceed to Provence. He is weary of undergoing humiliation, by the traces he has left of his money debts, actions, gestures, and behaviour; or Providence will not allow the malefactor to enjoy his condition in life, as if he had never been guilty."

The Marquis was, however, mistaken. His son, yielding to the exhortations of a sensible and affec-

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 3rd 1782.

tionate sister, had given up the idea of quitting his native country ; and, after settling his affairs at Neufchâtel, and terminating some political writings which we shall have occasion to notice hereafter, he set out for Provence, October 3rd 1782.

Thus, after a lapse of seven years, terminated the fatal episode of the loves of Mirabeau and Sophie. The development has proved the more difficult and painful to us, because it was impossible we could have passed over the circumstance without notice. Although it was our wish to limit the details as much as possible, we were, nevertheless, compelled to state every particular calculated, according to our plan, our duty, and our conviction, to place in their true light the facts as well as the persons connected therewith.

We have given our whole attention to presenting this narrative in such a form as would satisfy the legitimate exigences of history ; but, as much as possible, without any concession to the whims of that mischievous curiosity which other writers have flattered. Far from imitating them, we have excluded from our account all that does not necessarily belong to it. For instance, we have limited to a few indispensable statements all that relates to one of the parties the most implicated in the correspondence from Vincennes : we allude to Mirabeau's youngest sister. Not only have we not condescended to refute, but we have not even mentioned the suppositions equally infamous and false

which a biographer as unjust as he is shameless *, has presumed to make with reference to Madame de Cabris. The exposure of the groundlessness of these abominable insinuations would have been to us an easy task ; but it would also have proved an occasion for reviving unnecessary and scandalous particulars ;—though, by making such exposure, we could have shown, in the interest of Mirabeau, that among the external causes of his wanderings, was the influence which this sister exercised over him. We could also have explained the errors and misfortunes of the latter by her physical and moral constitution — by her bad education—by her imprudently precocious marriage to a man very inferior to herself in intellect, and who, early in life, became afflicted with incurable madness—and by her subsequent connexion with a villain. . . . But to what good would such explanations tend ?— what advantage could be derived from them ? Does history owe such disclosures to that frivolous or immoral curiosity to which they serve as mere amusement ? If the life of Madame de Cabris was very tempestuous, there is no forced necessity for her name being registered in the pages of history. The reading public has scarcely noticed the secondary part assigned to her in some obscure and by no means authentic passages of Manuel's collection, in some pamphlets, and in a certain discredited work †. Madame de Cabris, in her

* Peuchet, vol. I.

† We here allude to the four volumes by Peuchet, and we speak

riper age, made atonement for the faults of her youth. Restored to her natural feelings, she showed herself, in the decline of life, as admirable by her virtue, as by the prodigious faculties of her mind. We have, ourselves, had an opportunity of venerating in her the model of the most affecting domestic virtue. We saw her, long before she had reached old age, quit this life *, exhausted by the care and attention which she had bestowed upon the only person who had a right to reproach her—upon a husband who had become poor and infirm, and whose madness, for a long period peaceful, had assumed a character of peevishness and often violence. Such was Madame de Cabris after her moral regeneration, and it is only in this new character that we shall hereafter present her to our readers.

Having reached a period which, though still far from the close of our work, brings us to the end of one of its natural divisions, we here terminate that division, by relating what still remains to be told, concerning a subject which will not again be alluded to in the sequel of our narrative.

It has been asserted by many writers, that immediately after Mirabeau quitted the donjon of Vincennes,

of the work in such harsh terms, because public contempt has done justice to this compilation full of repetitions without a single novelty. To increase his text with quotations, Peuchet has copied all the particulars concerning Madame de Cabris, to be found in the Vincennes collection. But few readers will look for them in this work, untrue in every part, and often heavy and tedious.

* August 16th 1807. She was born September 4th 1752.

he basely deserted the unhappy Sophie, who, a year after, died a victim to this monstrous ingratitude, and received her death-blow in some degree, from the hand of a man for whom, in her heroic self-denial, she had sacrificed everything.

By the blessing of God we can disprove this assertion, which, if its untruth had not appeared evident to us, would have induced us to give up our task as Mirabeau's biographer, or rather would have prevented us from ever undertaking it. The following, instead of a calumnious romance, is the complete and exact truth, now published for the first time, of the circumstances which brought about and succeeded the breaking off of all connexion between Madame de Monnier and Mirabeau.

After the two first years of Madame de Monnier's residence at the convent of the Saintes-Claire, at Gien, whither she was conducted June 18th 1777, some relaxation took place of the rigour of her confinement. Several of the most respectable inhabitants of the town, were at times allowed to visit her in her cell; and it appears by the letters from the donjon of Vincennes *, that one of these individuals† aroused that extreme jealousy peculiar to Mirabeau's character. This is attested by numerous witnesses, and more especially

* Vol. I, p. 29; Vol. III. pp. 314, 329, 336, 373, 384, and 437.

† M. de Rancourt, who died at Gien in 1832.

by Mirabeau himself, in a great number of letters, some of them published.

Notwithstanding his imperative remonstrances, and his very explicit prohibitions, Sophie continued to receive M. de Rancourt's visits, and some others, of which she said nothing in her letters. These had certainly become cold and constrained. This silence concerning her visiters was made known, and perhaps exaggerated to Mirabeau by the persons through whose hands the secret correspondence between the lovers was conveyed backwards and forwards, between Gien and Vincennes.

Father Claude Maillet, a Franciscan priest, a sort of spiritual director (Mirabeau says, 'a sultan-monk *') attached to the convent of Saintes-Claire, and residing in the establishment, paid great attention to Madame de Monnier, and inspired her with friendship; and in the hope of being employed at court as a preacher, through the supposed interest of Mirabeau, Father Maillet obtained from Sophie, a strong recommendation to her lover, which was received the more angrily by the latter from being the more pressing. Some time after this, Father de Tellier, a Minim, a priest remarkable by his youth, the beauty of his person, and his eloquence in the pulpit, began to frequent the convent, and being well received by Madame de Monnier, the Franciscan conceived the greatest jealousy of him, and denounced him to the abbess, who, on account of

* Original letters from Vincennes, Vol. III. p. 435.

the Minim's order, and also of his extreme modesty and reserve, did not think proper to notice an accusation, which being dictated by interested motives, was on that very account to be looked at with suspicion. This rivalry between the two priests made a noise within the convent and without, and again officious reports were forwarded to Mirabeau. The correspondence so long full of passion, but which for several months had been languishing on both sides, now assumed quite a new character. Mirabeau wrote violent letters, the replies were bitter, and Sophie, deeply offended, fancying that under an assumed fit of jealousy, Mirabeau sought a rupture, was giving way to despair, when a mutual friend offered to bring about a verbal explanation, far preferable to letters, in which anger on both sides had succeeded to pettishness, and direct accusation to timid insinuations and mild reproaches.

This mutual friend was Dr. Ysabeau*, the convent physician, who, in imitation, and after the death of his father, had lavished all that the most skilful art and the most tender humanity could suggest upon the unhappy boarder, whose health and mind were equally affected. Compassionate, calm, and prudent, like the good angel of Vincennes, and equally disposed to serve the prisoners, he had become Sophie's zealous friend and unsuspected confidant. He wrote to Mirabeau,

* He is mentioned in the letters from Vincennes, by the initials Y—, Y. S—, by the word Ysab., and often by name.

then at Bignon, and who had been there for so many days past. The liberated captive secretly set out during the night of the 3rd of July 1781, and rode to Nogent-sur-Vernisson, which was only three leagues from Gien. Here he found Dr. Ysabeau, who conducted him privately to a summer-house in an isolated garden, situated out of the town of Gien. In that place Mirabeau assumed the dress of a pedlar, and under this disguise was introduced into the convent to see the doctor, and a nun whom, with Sophie's consent, he had let into the secret, in order to have a witness in case of accident or indiscretion. All three reached Sophie's cell without obstacle*. A long conference took place between Mirabeau and Sophie, in the presence of the physician and the nun, neither of whom withdrew a single moment. Mirabeau angrily made assertions without being sure they were well founded. Sophie defended herself with energy, and was at length provoked to vehement recrimination; for she had likewise received secret intelligence, and probal

* This is the whole truth concerning this interview, about which so many misstatements have been made. Instances of this may be found in Cadet-Gassicourt's Work, page 26, of the first edition and page 21 of second, and in the article "Mirabeau" in the "Encyclopédie Nouvelle des Contemporains," by Messrs. Arnault, Jouy, Norvins, &c. Vol. XIII. p. 351. Accustomed to give evidence of what we assert, we applied to the venerable Dr. Ysabeau, who is still alive, and obtained from him a written statement under his own hand, which remains in our possession, and from which this account is faithfully copied.

proofs. The anger, on both sides, passed all reasonable bounds. The lovers separated under feelings of great irritation; and Sophie was the more offended, because she really had not given Mirabeau any ground of complaint; at least such is our own conviction from the information afforded us on the spot by the venerable Dr. Ysabeau, and by the nun who was present, sister Louise, still alive (1831) and still attached, at eighty-two years of age, to the same house, now the hospital of the town of Gien.

From this period, all intercourse between them, whether personal or by letter, was irrevocably broken off. Sophie remained deeply afflicted, she fell ill, her eyes inflamed by tears and want of sleep, were several times stricken with ophthalmia; but time and care restored her to health. This single fact is sufficient to prove that a coolness existed between the lovers prior to the rupture, which would have proved a death-blow to Sophie, if her feelings had remained such as by her former letters we have shown them to have been, when she talked of *suicide*, every time she experienced deep and profound affliction connected with her attachment to Mirabeau.

In March 1783, Madame de Monnier obtained an almost entire freedom. This occurred after the death of her husband *, whose name she had ceased to bear

* In a register of the royal orders for detention, deposited at the
VOL. III. T

ever since 1776. At Gien she was known as Madame de Malleroy. Her family now pressed her to return to Dijon; but her mother being dead (she died April 18th 1783*), and Madame de Monnier dreading the censure and contempt of her other relations, virtuous as her mother, but much more austere†, resolved to remain with the kind-hearted nuns who had consoled her. She occupied a small house belonging to the convent and prepared for her accommodation by the kindness of Dr. Ysabeau. It communicated with the convent by a back door, but had a separate entrance from the street.

Préfecture de Police, it is stated that Madame de Monnier was liberated January 31st 1784.

* M. de Ruffey outlived his respectable wife eleven years. He died September 10th 1794. His eldest son, Frederick Henry Richard de Ruffey, Chamber President in the Burgundy Parliament, was condemned to death by the revolutionary tribunal, and beheaded April 10th 1794. His second son, Charles Richard de Ruffey, Count of Vesvarotte, formerly President of the Chamber of Accounts at Dijon, and whom we shall presently again have occasion to mention, is still alive (1831).

† We have before us a letter dated June 18th 1780, in which Madame de Monnier announces this determination.

"Madame de V. (Villiers) asked me whether, when my business was settled, I would live with my mother; I replied in the negative, whatever might occur; that I should prefer spending my life in a convent on account of the past. Those who know my family will easily understand my motives."

The well-known fact of Madame de Monnier's persevering in her determination to remain at Gien, where she died, has not prevented Peuchet from writing at all risks, as he frequently does.

"She sought in the society of her family, a happiness which for a long time had been unknown to her." Vol. II. p. 333.

Madame de Monnier, who was allowed by her family an annual pension of three thousand francs, paid the nuns a stipulated annual sum for her board and lodging, and continued to receive the services of sister Marie, whom the situation of the house allowed to give them without violating her vows.

In a short time, Madame de Monnier, taking advantage of the freedom she enjoyed, formed a society of several persons attracted to her house by the graces of her person and manners, and the deserved reputation of her ability, gentleness and benevolence which she had acquired. She also accepted invitations which came to her from all quarters, and visited the principal families in the town. She further made excursions into the country, and would reside for several weeks at a time in different chateaux in the neighbourhood, those, for instance, of Beauvoir, Malartic, Dampierre, Dominus, Mal Thou, belonging to the families of Foudras, Varle, de Villiers, and Poterat.

Having got rid of the Franciscan and the Minim, whose rejected pretensions and imaginary rivalry had, in some degree, committed her, she became an object of ridiculous attention to an officer of the Maréchaussée, named Lecuyer, not at all deficient in intellect or valour, and enjoying a certain degree of esteem, but a man of violent temper which, though long restrained by a wish to please, burst forth in all its violence, the moment he had won Madame de Monnier's confidence and

affection. This intimacy, which did not last long, was checkered with uneasiness, anxiety and quarrels; and Sophie was far from finding in it that happiness of which she seemed always in search, but could never attain.

After a time, however, she thought she had reached it. In her intercourse with society, she became acquainted with a retired captain of cavalry, a widower of thirty-five, whose late wife was of the Rancourt family, a member of which had formerly awakened Mirabeau's jealousy *. M. Edme Benoit de Poterat often met Madame de Monnier in the best society at Gien, and in the neighbouring chateaux. A conformity of opinions and tastes, a mutual habit of melancholy, the communication to each other of their respective misfortunes, and even their mutual anxiety for each other's health, which in each had been affected by mental and bodily suffering:—all these things tended to unite them by a bond of tender sympathy, which soon ripened into a warmer feeling. Sophie, enlightened by experience, endeavoured, but ineffectually, to resist this *penchant*.

The lovers were mutually captivated; and both being free, they determined to marry—a plan justified by their respective ages, their attachment to each other, and their condition in life. Madame de Monnier visited her friend several times at his estate of Thou, where her presence was authorised by that of the proprietor's

* Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, Vol. I. p. 29; Vol. III. pp. 314, 329, 336, 373, 384, and 437.

sister and a niece, both very amiable persons. But these being called away by family duties, were forced to leave the chateau, and the increasing ill health of M. de Poterat forced him to quit the country whither Madame de Monnier could no longer visit him. He therefore fixed his residence at Gien close to hers, and received from her the most anxious and tender attentions. All her care, however, could not overcome the slow but incurable consumption with which he was attacked, and she soon acquired the painful conviction that her friend had only a short time to live.

From this period her resolution was evidently taken. She had always kept up a close intimacy with the excellent Dr. Ysabeau and his kind wife, who was the sincerest and most useful of Madame de Monnier's friends. She replied to their kind soothings with a well calculated mixture of grief and apparent resignation. She told them that being too much accustomed to suffer, and having succeeded in surmounting afflictions such as can be felt only once in the course of a life, she should not allow herself to be overcome by the less affliction, painful as it was, with which she was threatened. She spoke calmly of distant projects, and then turned the conversation upon a recent occurrence much talked of in the town, and connected with a young sempstress, whose imprudence had endangered her life. Madame Monnier inquired without affectation * about the effects

of suffocation from charred wood. She asked whether death necessarily ensued. The doctor replied that when the suffocation was gradual and incomplete, instances had been known of persons saved by the instinctive effect of introducing air into the room by opening a window, or even by breaking a pane of glass. She well noted this information, spoke very freely on other topics, and then took her leave.

Meanwhile, M. de Poterat's complaint was fast approaching its term, and no hope remaining, Madame de Monnier's grief, and the situation in which she would be left by his death, awakened the sympathy of every one, and brought her numerous visitors. Among others, was a thoughtless woman, the wife of a counsellor elect, who tortured the unfortunate Sophie with her consolation and advice. One day this lady represented to her the situation in which M. de Poterat's death would soon place the woman who had linked her fate with his; the effect which would be produced upon public opinion by an intimate connection, the consequences of which could no longer be legalised by marriage; the disgrace and desertion which would ensue; lastly, the necessity of quitting Gien and returning to Dijon. Madame de Monnier listened to all this without the least visible sign of emotion, and made no reply.

Two days after this conversation, on the 8th of Sep-

"You have risked your life by using charred wood; sometimes it kills, sometimes it produces accidents resembling death, without being so, but which cause people to be buried alive. Never use it, I entreat you."

tember, 1789, a short time before day-break, M. de Poterat breathed his last in Sophie's arms. On this event being communicated to Dr. and Madame Ysabeau, they immediately hastened to M. de Poterat's house, and forcibly withdrew Sophie from the body which she held in her embrace. They led her home, and entreated her to come and reside with them, never more to separate from them. She replied with tears to their kind intreaties, and in order not to accompany them immediately, she pretended to have some domestic arrangements which required that she should be alone for one whole day, after which she would remove to their house and quit it no more. She agreed that the doctor should come and fetch her the next morning at nine o'clock, on his return from a patient whom he was to visit at Briare, a neighbouring town, and to leave home for this purpose at a very early hour.

After the departure of Dr. Ysabeau and his wife, she called sister Louise; and her servant boy, and informed them that she was going on the morrow to visit a friend with whom she should spend the day. She then dismissed them after giving her orders for the next morning. Being now alone, she collected her papers, tied them in bundles, sealed them, wrote a letter containing her last instructions, and then entered a small closet, the smallness and closeness of which she considered suited to the design she had long since resolved to carry into execution. She then closed and carefully caulked

the door and the window. Two chafing-dishes full of charcoal which she had just lighted were then placed by her, one on each side of the arm-chair upon which she seated herself. In order to prevent her purpose from being counteracted by any instinctive effort of nature, she bound her two legs first under, then above her clothes. She then tied one of her arms to the arm-chair; and afterwards fixed the other arm with a ligature prepared beforehand, and then fastened with her teeth. In this position she calmly awaited death.

On the 9th of September, at six o'clock in the morning, the serving-boy, according to the instructions his mistress had given him the day before, went to take her orders about her departure. Having entered the principal room, he perceived that Madame de Monnier had not been in bed all night. He spoke, but received no reply: he then attempted to open the closet, the unusual fastening of which alarmed him. Having, at length, broken a pane of the closet window, he perceived his mistress without motion, and apparently deprived of life. His shouts for assistance brought the neighbours into the house. The fatal news soon spread through the little town of Gien, where Madame de Monnier was very much beloved. Notice was also given to the authorities, and M. Bousseau, Procureur du Roi of the Bailliage, proceeded to the house,

attended by a surgeon. The closet door was then forced open, and the suicide verified *."

An express was immediately sent for Dr. Ysabeau, whom the messenger met on the road, and who, as he rode full gallop towards Madame de Monnier's house, endeavoured to cheat his profound grief, by thinking of the possibility of recalling her to life, as the suffocation might, perhaps, not be complete. But, alas ! when he arrived he lost all hope : the ignorant surgeon, who had attended the magistrate, had not thought of trying the most simple means of resuscitation. Full of the idea, though without any apparent reason, of the possibility of a pregnancy, he proposed to open the body, which he performed upon the spot, with the ignorant precipitancy of a barbarian. An hour after, the body had nothing left of the human form, and Dr. Ysabeau's grief was the more intense, because some remains of coloration and heat, which had existed prior to this atrocious operation, seemed to justify the hopes he had conceived before his arrival.

The letter which Madame Monnier had written the day before, containing her will and last instructions,

* Sophie was born January 9th 1753 ; she was therefore thirty-six years and eight months old when she died, and not " twenty-eight years of age," as Peuchet states, vol. i. p. 235 ; and " twenty-six years old," vol. ii. p. 334. So careful and well-informed is this writer, whom several others have copied, and among others, the gifted author of a notice inserted in vol. xxiv. of the " *Revue de Paris*."—1831, No. 3, pp. 160—162, &c.

was addressed to Dr. Ysabeau. She left her papers to one of her brothers, who afterwards came to Gien and claimed them. She distributed among her friends a few little tokens of remembrance, and the remainder of her personal effects she left to some poor people, whose poverty she had secretly alleviated for several years past. This horrible event was considered a public calamity at Gien; and the following day all the inhabitants of the town formed the funeral cortège. Though forty-two years have elapsed since this event, the memory of Madame de Monnier still lives at Gien. Among the upper classes, the graces of her mind, her amiable disposition, and the mild virtues which she practised, form a theme of constant admiration. The poor still speak of her laborious charity, for she assisted them with the work of her hands, as well as with money. Her acts of benevolence have become the subject of popular tradition. On All Saints day, in 1831, we ourselves saw an old pauper, over whose head nearly a hundred winters had passed, whose eyes were dimmed, their fountains not dried up, shedding tears upon an isolated tomb in the middle of the cemetery of the camp, to which the poor old man had requested to be led, in order to pray once more, as he said, for the suffering angel, who formerly gave him aid and consolation!

Let us briefly sum up this lamentable episode. From Sophie's very infancy, her character presented

attended by a surgeon. The closet door was then forced open, and the suicide verified *."

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to such a companion, Sophie's burning passion, being without any specific object, remained smouldering in her bosom, ready to burst forth into a flame on the slightest excitement. On a sudden, in the midst of the *ennui* and solitude of a small provincial town, a man appeared, the first of an age corresponding with her own, whom Sophie had yet known. "All the stays of virtue were wanting to her *;" and she was always surrounded by old men and priests. This man was young; he was persecuted and unhappy. Armed with the powers of seduction belonging to the most fascinating mind that ever existed, he was a most dangerous acquaintance for a young wife so situated. Seeing Sophie daily, he drank in large draughts of a passion always and every where persuasive, but which, being elevated to a unison with his prodigious faculties of intellect, derived from it supernatural eloquence. No woman could have withstood it; and in such a perilous situation, what ægis could have preserved the ardent and inexperienced Sophie? She threw herself into the seducer's arms, a virgin after five years of marriage. The excitement of exuberant youth, the hitherto unknown delight of loving and being beloved, repeated ill-usage, a rash elopement, an unexpected arrest, the torture of separation, the ephemeral happiness of

* Second Case for Counsel's opinion, in the matter of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier, p. 192 of the 8vo edition.

maternity, though she felt nothing but its sufferings, a long and rigorous imprisonment, the loss of a beloved child whom she had been allowed to see only once, a daily correspondence—and such a correspondence!—all tended, during the space of seven years, to feed this passion which seemed to increase with the sufferings it cost her. But a period at length arrived when the burning letters of this correspondence became languid and rare on both sides; and shortly afterwards, mutual suspicion, if not mutual infidelity, suddenly severed two lovers who, before, seemed to have exchanged their lives with each other. Great as was the passion that had filled Sophie's heart, that heart was not yet exhausted. After a time, she made a second choice; but fate reserved for her the only misfortune in love which she had not yet felt—the death of her lover. . . . Saturated, as she was with grief, and, from her very youth, caring but little for life, which she would not accept but on condition of loving, she resolved not to survive an event to which she had already looked forward before it took place. On the very day her lover died, she inflicted death upon herself.

It was, no doubt, Mirabeau, who first brought Sophie into the dangerous course which ended in self-destruction. But, let us not fear to add, that the fate of this victim of love and fatality was fixed beforehand by her natural physical and mental constitution, and the irreparable fault committed by her family in forcing her

to marry the Marquis of Mounier. Had Mirabeau never gone to Pontarlier, and Sophie had to defend her heart and senses against an ordinary man, her destiny would have been the same, and her career closed by the same catastrophe.

We may claim to be pardoned for having entered into the above particulars concerning this ill-fated woman, when it is considered that an imputation, like the one cast upon the memory of Mirabeau, must have painfully affected us, under the feelings by which we are actuated in writing this work, and which we every where acknowledge. In the present instance, we have yielded to those feelings, only because, on the one hand, our explanation is not offensive to Sophie's memory; and, on the other, because the accusation against Mirabeau, long since buried in oblivion, has been dug up again for posterity by a writer who, at the risk of committing the authority of his name and the dignity of his subject, has thought proper, on several occasions, to mix up Mirabeau's private life with matters of general history; and on the present occasion, among others, has not scrupled to disgrace his work by a calumny borrowed from the most obscure and odious libels*.

* M. Ch. Lacretelle expresses himself in the following terms:—
“After his release from Vincennes he (Mirabeau) forgot that Sophie, the thought of whom had appeared to fill his whole soul, and MADAME LE MONNIER, LEFT ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE, COMMITTED SUICIDE.”—*History of France during the eighteenth century*. Vol. vi., p. 9.

BOOK XII.

WE have already stated that the Bailli, being acted upon by the mistrust formerly excited in his mind by the Marquis, as well as by the timidity often consequent upon old age, and the fear of failure in the plan of reconciliation between Mirabeau and his wife, consented, with great repugnance, to receive his nephew.

"I wish, I confess, that he would not come; for I cannot conceal from you that I have a singular aversion to this man, arising from his letters to me, and copies which he sent me of those he has written to you, and some other persons. In all these productions I detect the most intolerable pride, a confidence which proves that he believes only in himself, and so furious a divergence from my own notions, that I think it impossible I could ever accustom myself to his company*.

"Behold the Count rescued from the claws of St.

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated October 5th, 1782.

Hermandad! In the letter I have received, he informs me that he is on his way hither; but as such a head as his requires something romantic and Apollonian, he says, poetically: ‘I set out for the place, the access to which ought not to have been made so difficult to me.’ I am waiting for him to reply, and ask him what he means by this ridiculous sentence:—for who made the access to this country so difficult to him? He has brought our name low in this place, where, formerly, and before his time, it was really respected and honoured, as having been borne by none but honest men, and at times by men who were great in their sphere.

“At length, I clearly perceive the weight of the burthen with which you are loading me; and I know not whether, being so attached as you are to what you consider your duties, you have not conceived a wrong notion upon this point; for, truly, none but a father can keep in check a man constituted as this man is. * * *

“I have told you over and over again, that if this gentleman tires my patience, I will give up the house to him and withdraw. And you may be sure I will keep my word—for no flowers of rhetoric shall persuade me that I have a right to turn the first-born of the head of the family out of a house to which, like many younger sons, I might have been myself a stranger.

Say that you are master, as much as you please—that is very true: but you cannot delegate your authority to another.

* * * * *

“ I again repeat that it appears to me this man ought to have no other domicile than his father’s house. Not having the misfortune to be his father, I have no right to take him to task. You may tell him, a thousand times over, that you transfer your authority to me, but I shall tell you the same number of times that to do so is not in your power *.”

This determined resistance on the part of the Bailli for a moment checked his brother, who, considering that in order not to break it was better to bend, wrote to this effect :—

“ I will not allow this man to tease you, if he fails in some obreptitious romance worthy of his skill, or in the part of Rhadamistus, for which he seems purposely to have been procreated. Alas! if you become discouraged, it will be all over with me; therefore, pray assist me even now in determining whither I shall send him to reside, the moment he becomes, in the least degree, a burthen to you. I cannot order him out of the country, because I should thereby appear to drive him from it by force. Were I to send him out of

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated October 12th 1782.

Provence, it would be placing him further than ever from a reconciliation with his wife, which it is our interest to bring about, and his right to obtain. Besides, he would go and commit evil, and would lay waste some other province, whilst, in yours, he is well known. I ever think that his place of residence should be as near the coast as possible, as, perhaps, the sight of the sea may tempt him to seek his fortune in the East Indies *."

Mirabeau meanwhile was on his road to Provence.

" If the gentleman has not lied, according to his praiseworthy custom, he set out on Thursday the 10th, and must have arrived by this time. He wrote to Saillanette, to beg she would recommend him to your kindness; he seems to be afraid. *Rara antecedentem scelestum deseruit pede pœna claudo.* You must say to him: 'Sir,' or 'Nephew,' this is my house, as it is your father's. When an attempt was made to new-make, or to repair you, you were shown the door: now that you have undergone all your trials, I consent to take you in and afford you house-room, since my brother sends you to me; but I do this merely to give you time to settle your affairs, and no longer†."

The Bailli now patiently waited for his nephew's arrival.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 26th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated October 15th 1782.

“ The Count is not yet arrived ; perhaps he will not come at all. As your son, and because you wish him to have children, I will receive him ; but I think it impossible he can regain my good opinion, because I know, even better than yourself, how well he can feign, and act what part he pleases ; so that I can never place confidence in this gallant youth, even though he should do the best possible*. Your madman is almost at his journey’s end. He will this day reach Tourettes, whither I have sent a carriage for him ; so that I may anticipate the honour of seeing him this evening. I know not how he will like my greeting†.”

Mirabeau, however, had reason to be pleased with his reception.

“ My uncle did all he could to receive me coldly, but could not succeed. He had placed fusileers and speech-makers on the road to his mansion, whilst *feux de joie* blazed forth on all sides. He gave all the pomp in his power to my arrival, in order to do me honour in the province. It is true that the pleasure of the country people, when they saw me again, was not at all feigned. The fact is, I never did them any harm ; and my ancestors, during three centuries, did them much good‡.”

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated October 18th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated October 19th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated October 22nd 1782. This extract is to be found, verbatim,

This popular feeling in Mirabeau's favour, was a-
 tested by the Bailli. "What surprised me was the joy
 of the people here on seeing him arrive, although he is
 in debt to some of them *. To tell you the truth, he
 is much beloved here, although his debts here are great
 for such a place as this†. They are greatly attached to
 him, and I was much moved by the strong expression
 to this effect uttered by some among them ‡."

But the Marquis was not so easily pleased, and
 replied:—

"I am not at all edified by his very jovial and clownish
 letter, in which he speaks of nothing but the merry-
 makings at the castle. You ought, I think, to have
 prevented these village festivities, for it is laughing both
 at the decree, and at his creditors §. As for the joy of
 the peasantry on seeing him arrive, the Egyptians ut-
 tered shouts of joy when they saw a turkey pass bear-
 ing the name of Meleager. Any man may purchase
 for a franc two hours of emotion at a play; and a pipe
 and tabor would make these peasants dance before a cat||."

in one of the letters published by Vitry, to whom Mirabeau wrote on
 the same subject. See page 257 of Vitry's collection.

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau,
 dated November 8th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated Novem-
 ber 12th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated November
 16th 1782.

§ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau,
 dated November 3rd 1782.

|| Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau,
 dated November 22nd 1782.

No sooner had Mirabeau personal access to the Bailli and could explain and defend himself *viva voce*, than he regained his uncle's affection and confidence.

“ I am of opinion that your son should not see your letters, for I begin to think that people make you fancy him much worse than he really is. I am extremely well satisfied with him. * * * Allow me to tell you that if I firmly believed all you have written to me against Honoré, I would never have undertaken to receive him, and you yourself would have acted very unjustly in fixing such a charge upon me. I must tell you that for three weeks past, I have been doing my best to discover some attempt on his part to examine my papers, and I sound him a great deal without appearing to do so. Up to the present hour, I have reason to be satisfied with him, except perhaps that his looks evince a little hastiness, though not to excess, and that he tells some highly embellished stories which, however, I cannot ascertain to be untrue. In a word, I will conceal nothing from you, but I certainly shall not try to excite you against your children. Another undertook, undertakes, and will undertake that task. *Basta*, God is upon all things*. I cannot tell you otherwise than I see, but a whole month without changing or letting any thing bad be perceived by eyes, weak perhaps, but which look closely into matters, is a thing

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 8th 1782.

that appears to me difficult *. He has now been here six weeks, and I cannot but be satisfied with him. I find in him no exuberance at present, only a little exaggeration in what he relates.

“ He had preserved some papers and placed them in faithful hands. Since he has been here, he has told me certain things concerning the truth of which I lately had only a very wavering faith; but these papers having been returned to him, I have seen, read, and held in my hands the clearest evidence; 1st, That his mother attempted to engage him in her party, and asked him to give her information concerning your affairs; and I have seen, read, and held in my hands the threats which two agents of that woman held out to him, also the hopes by which they sought to induce him to do what they desired. With reference to other matters, I have seen sufficient, and am sufficiently well acquainted with the hand-writings of the parties, to tell you that although he has committed many faults, he has often been more unfortunate than culpable. You know me well: I have never deceived any human being, and shall not begin with you. Be assured that often when matters have been represented to you in an unfavourable light, if the real particulars had been known to you, it would have appeared that he was merely unfortunate †.”

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 23rd 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated November 24th 1782.

The Bailli's assertion with regard to the attempts made by the Marchioness of Mirabeau to engage her son on her side, was suggested by a fact which occurred only a few days before this letter was written, and which we here relate as it affords further evidence of the unjust opinion which the Marquis of Mirabeau had always entertained of his son.

"Lefebvre * told me that he had just sent from my door a packet directed in my son's hand-writing to his mother, the postage marked upon it being three livres, twelve sous. I scolded him for not having taken it in; but the thing was done and could not be helped. Now, some days ago, I received notice of an atrocious statement against me about to be published by my adverse party †. The manuscript has been seen, with corrections in a disguised hand, resembling that of the Count. This statement is loaded with precedents, and is written in a style of fury and the devil's own malice. The first pages very much resemble the gentleman's bathos. *

* * * * I cannot think of this cesspool without a feeling of rage which I did not think was in me. God, who sees all things, sees the bottom of my heart, and the cruel conspiracy of these wretches to drag their only protector into the abyss. Had the Almighty given me less courage, I should have been there long ago; but by pursuing this course they will reach no other goal

* Porter of the Mirabeau hotel at Paris.

† The Marchioness of Mirabeau.

than that of all malefactors. Charlemagne and Li-Chi-Min, the two greatest men the earth has produced, had each a son who was a parricide. And who am I, that I should complain of less than that, if indeed it be less * ?”

A denial of the Marquis's unworthy suppositions was immediately sent in reply to his letter.

“ I have nothing to say of your statement about Lefebvre's packet, addressed to Madame de Mirabeau, except that your son has some very kind friends near you, and that he has laid himself open to them, therefore they serve him well. I shall endeavour to sift this matter. Whilst I was writing the above he entered the room; and in the course of conversation, told me of himself, that his mother had written to him stating that she was surprised he did not make her acquainted with the result of his lawsuit, and that he had forwarded to her a copy of the deed of compromise and of the decree. This then is the history of the suspicious packet, and chance led him to mention the matter himself †.”

“ I was determined to return to the subject.—At the expiration of three or four days, I questioned him calmly about the respect due to his mother, asking him whether he had given her an account of the Pontarlier

business. He showed me letters from her, taxing him bitterly with not having made her acquainted with the result of this business, reproaching him likewise, in that style in which you know she excels, with her kindness towards him, and accusing him of ingratitude in not writing to her. Thus, you have, once more, the history of your porter's packet *."

These explanations appeased the Marquis upon this point, for he said no more about it; but he did not become more favourably disposed towards his son.

"I can see you hence, going through, with the gentleman, pretty nearly the same course of ratiocination with which he amused me every morning during eight months and a half†. If the devil were to warn us a hundred and thirty-five times in an hour, it would be impossible not to be vexed at his manner of enhancing and reasoning, and the more so because being capable of perpetrating the worst as well as the best, it is all one to him, and the true or the false being absolutely the same thing to him, and the straight and the crooked likewise, I really think, God forgive me! that he believes one half. As also it is a fact I wrote to you of him, that it is impossible to preserve any thing

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 16th 1782.

† From May 20th 1781 to February 2nd 1782. Chaussard says, page 64, that Mirabeau spent *sixteen months* with his father. This is an error to be added to the many others committed by Mirabeau's biographers, because they all wrote without first obtaining the necessary information.

but the cardinal points of his story: that is to say, whether it be a voluntary lie or not—it is still a lie. My only plan on this head will be to keep you well informed. * * *

“ You have written to Caroline that ‘ I sent him to you to get rid of him.’ But I can promise you that when this business is finished he shall never more trouble you, nor me either *. I am disabused from putting my own prudence in the place of other people’s opinions. I wanted to do it with those under my charge; but my Plutarch tells me, with reference to madmen, that once upon a time the moon begged its mother to make for it a little surtout that should fit its figure. ‘ And how can I do that?’ said the mother. ‘ Sometimes I see you slender, sometimes round, sometimes horned, sometimes increasing, sometimes diminishing. To the devil with the attempt of clothing mad people in garments that will fit them †.’ ”

“ But why,” replied the Bailli, “ do you conclude your letter with a curse upon your son? You say that he shall never embrace you again as long as he lives? Why, having pardoned, should you now reject him? What wrong has he since committed ‡? Pray whose duty is it to support him? All that you write

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 19th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated November 22nd 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 23rd 1782.

to me convinces me that it is difficult to understand one another at a distance; and, further, you are made to seize with avidity upon every thing that is unfavourable to your son *."

The extracts which we have taken from the letters of the Marquis of Mirabeau, contain almost always the language of mistrust and animosity. We now give a specimen from the same pen, of lordly as well as paternal pride. Some expressions used by the Intendant Gressien †, and by Mirabeau, greatly displeased the Marquis.

"They are easy, as it appears, with regard to his creditors. 'It is I who assure you of this,' says one—a sentence which calls to my recollection the 'It is I who tell you so,' of that puppy Desbirons. Little accustomed to this tone in men of business, I admire the influence of contact in making them insolent. The other fellow says to me: 'The bailiffs will not come in search of me at my own residence.' If I had dared to utter such an expression to my father, he would have cudgelled me on the spot, even although I had been thirty-three years of age. As for you, independently of our equality, your letters, when you do not scold me, always bear a character of equity and tenderness which is balm to my soul; but I cannot suffer the familiarity

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 7th 1782.

† An Advocate as honourable as he was learned, and who enjoyed the esteem and confidence of both the Marquis and the Bailli.

of companionship in any body else, seeing as I do her—
so many poor creatures from both court and city, who
accost me with the attitude, the form, and the very la-
ruffles of inferiority—at least of *moral* inferiority *.”

It was not however paternal pride alone, but paternal hatred which appeared in the Marquis's letters whenever he mentioned his son.

“ A person writes to me from Aix in these words —
'I hope that this man will not give those he finds
means to gain over reason to repent their weakness. I
know that he has a surprising and inconceivable talent
for winning people.' Now you will immediately say
that the writer has been gained ; but remember the
fable of him who held a snake in his hand, and asserted
that it was a very flexible whip †.”

“ Be it so,” the Bailli replied ; “ but why, as I am
to profit by the fable to which you allude, have you put
into my hands this same snake that is to sting me ‡ ? ”

The Bailli continued to attest Mirabeau's good conduct, venturing now and then upon remonstrances, much better founded than useful.

“ Honoré continues to be docile, without any such

* Unpublished letters from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 22nd 1782, and January 27th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 26th 1783.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 7th 1783.

thoughts as you mention, and much more uxorious, from calculation or otherwise, than you suppose. How soon would the business be settled if you were here! But have you never perceived that a man chalks out for himself duties that correspond only with his own tastes? Perhaps I may catch you doing this: for he who would administer the lash of discipline to his own shoulders until the blood started, would not hear the slightest contradiction. A hundred years ago, your grandfather said, 'There is no longer any honour except in castles;' Now, do you believe that it was your taste or your duty that induced you to fix your residence at Paris, the most stinking sink of corruption of any whose black vapours and filthy reptiles the sun shines upon? Was it your duty to go and inhale the atmosphere of that corrupt and money-jobbing city, where even the perspiration of the skin is corrosive and pestilential; where, moreover, you, who are a light yourself, are content to be a reflection, and have become fit for nothing in consequence of your incapacity in, and aversion to bowing and scraping, fawning and flattering, all which are as instinctive to the dwellers in courts and cities, with their faces of plaster, as dabbling in the mud is to ducks? I recollect, indeed, your telling me that, on account of either your children, or your wife—I forget which—you were forced to reside within reach of the government; but you would not have required the services of the government, had you kept your family in Provence.

You would have acquired any where else the ~~same~~ celebrity you have gained at Paris. Besides, you ~~could~~ have done without such celebrity; for it is not of ~~that~~ nature which best becomes a man of quality—the ~~less~~ so, as a thirst for reputation is a sort of dropsy, ~~the~~ more to be regretted, because the public always ~~claim~~ back their applause increased a hundredfold. ~~You~~ have noble estates in Provence, which have been left to the charge of a rascally agent, and this in favour ~~of~~ a plot of mud, in the middle of which stands the ~~little~~ mansion of an ordinary country gentleman*. Your estates in Provence are reduced in value, their ~~pro-~~duce made away with, and your castle dilapidated. All the other estates in the province, without any ~~out-~~lay, have doubled in value by time alone. Yours, ~~with~~ great outlay, are far from having doubled. Confess, that in this respect, you have chalked out duties for yourself according to your own taste. Nevertheless, the only thing I blame you for in this matter is, the confidence which made you treat with the ~~great~~test rogues upon earth, as if you had to do with honesty incarnate†. Without reading your letters over again, I recollect, in the gross, all you have written to me

* The estate and mansion of Bignon, upon which the Marquis confessed he had expended more than 300,000 francs in rural experiments, which had deteriorated rather than improved the property.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 28th 1782.

about Honoré, and therefore I never lose sight of him ; but I cannot possibly, in honour and conscience, say that which is not true. He is very docile, and if, formerly, he completed nothing, he is very much altered, for he now assiduously pursues his undertakings. I will even tell you that I think this man has that portion of head which is deficient in us, and which I verily believe is the best ; for we are neither of us fit for any thing but to fire blank cartridges, and study Plato's republic. I am, therefore, well satisfied with Honoré ; nevertheless, I sleep with one eye open, though I think I might shut it with safety *."

The Marquis, disarmed for a time, was content to reply—

" I shall not answer you concerning the facts you state, because it belongs only to a fool, or to a minister, to speak decidedly at such a distance. As for my works, you are skilled in the knowledge of voracious minds ; and you know, that if they are not occupied externally, they devour all inside. Now, what on earth should I have done with my books, for which you censure me ? And what, in the name of God, should I do, if I did not throw myself out of myself ?—if I did not vomit forth the many thoughts that would otherwise so greatly abridge your brother ? Place yourself in my situation, in every sense and generation, position

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 16th 1782.

and matter, and your strong mind will then have bad company in its ramblings. Now, we have received a respected name: you have rendered it illustrious, and I celebrated. I accepted the will of fate and of duty; I may have been deceived by my head and my heart, upon both of which judgment has long since been passed both in my conscience and in my confessions. But I have acted as I conceived, felt, thought, and was able; for whoever does not take his own conscience for his sole judge, is at issue with himself all his life*. I have almost always exaggerated and misplaced my conscience, but never voluntarily and with evil intent. God is my good and just judge; and no doubt I have so acted as to have no other†."

We have lengthened a little the preceding extracts because we found them useful to complete the development of character which we considered necessary. We shall now give an account of the attempts made to bring about a reconciliation between Mirabeau and his wife, separated, *de facto*, during the last eight years. The greatest obstacles to this event had long been anticipated by the Bailli.

"I know of nothing worse than being allied to fire and water; or to make a tennis ball rebound when it falls upon a feather-bed. Your son, with great powers

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 18th 1782.

† Unpublished letter, from the same to the same, dated December 20th 1782.

of intellect, but always acted upon by warmth of heart ; and you and I have to convince people, who are not without talent, but have no more sensibility than Chinese Pagodas.

“ I think it right that Honoré should make every advance towards his wife and her father, though I expect to obtain nothing from them. These people affect to love and respect me ; but they think of me only when I am in sight, and there could not be less communication between Mecca and the Holy Sepulchre than between us. They think only of their pleasure. They get up a party, or a play, or music, or anything they can imagine to take their revenge upon time, by killing it, as it kills them. This forms the chief part of their occupations, and your daughter-in-law is the principal divinity of the circle in which they move : 1st, Because she is the richest person in it ; 2ndly, Because the collaterals (*impia gens* !) have an interest in keeping her in that situation, and her husband would be a Marplot the more dangerous in proportion as fire is more intense in the middle of a *glacière* *.

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 6th 1781.

The following prior and subsequent details are given in a note, in order to avoid extending our text.

“ I perceive that since Honoré’s release from prison, they are doing all they possibly can to make him angry with his young wife. There are parties to Tholonet (a seat belonging to the Count of Galiffet, situated about a league from Aix) and to Marseilles, with-

“ Your son thinks that, under these circumstances, a suit for a separation would be an act of sacrilege on

out either her father or her aunt (the Countess de Grasse, of Bar *), plays in which, for want of amateur actors and actresses, professional persons of either sex are introduced, &c. Notwithstanding numerous pressing invitations sent to me a hundred times, I have always affected to refuse going either to Tholonet, or to these plays; but my refusal seems not to be felt. Yesterday I was obligingly reproached with not being so often seen at their house as formerly; but I told her in the presence of her aunt, that in a short time nobody would know her place of residence, nor even her name; and that in future she would be called *Madame de Tholonet* instead of *Madame de Mirabeau*. She did not seem to comprehend the force

* The family of Grasse was connected with the Countess of Mirabeau by the strongest bonds of affection as well as of kindred. At the period of the suit for a separation, of which we are about to give an account, Madame de Mirabeau's unexpected refusal to return to her husband, and her libellous statements in justification of this refusal, were attributed to the instances of the collaterals. Count de Grasse, the chief of the house, was openly accused of being at the head of this league, by Mirabeau, who wrote to him, December 20th, 27th, and 30th, 1783, these violent and insulting letters, afterwards published, pages 51 and 53 of his “Case for the Grand Counsel,” on appeal from a decree of the Parliament of Provence. Mirabeau, moreover, pursued his enmity against Count de Grasse, and displayed it whenever he had an opportunity. For instance, he once mentioned him in these terms—

“ ‘If M. de Grasse has shown the English that intrigue could still dictate an unworthy choice in France, our D'Orvilliers, our Suffrein, and our Vaudreuil, must have convinced them that we still have seamen, and that the race of Duquesne, Jean-Bart, Dugué-Trouin, La Bourdonnois, (I put the plebeians first,) Tourville, d'Etrées, and Relingue—that the race of great sea commanders which arose on a sign from the monarch, can again arise at his command.’ ”—*Doubts upon the freedom of the Scheldt*, p. 78.

their part ; but their cold hearts do not look so high, but push on towards their ends ; and Honoré must

of what I said ; but her aunt, whom I examined closely, appeared somewhat surprised."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 14th 1781.*

The Marquis approved of this information, for he wrote, March 22nd 1781, in reply to his brother.

"It appears to me that you said your say with all becoming delicacy. * * * What you stated was very proper and well timed."

In another letter the Bailli observes—

"They are sorry that the plays and balls are interrupted by our being in the land of the living. A milliner said, the other day ; 'that a gentleman had come who had interrupted the balls and plays at Tholonet, and she therefore sold nothing.' But this woman did not include the supper parties which please a multitude of persons, and a very gay house where there is singing all day long, but whose piping is now put out of tune."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 19th 1783.*

"Marignane is deeply tainted with that personal feeling which you term the scrofula of self-love, and his daughter has become necessary to him in order that he may have a house and a society in which he is *epicuri de grege porcus*. The collaterals have persuaded him that he is upon very bad terms with his son-in-law, with whom he used to be uttering coarse ribaldry from morning till night, when they were together. He is conscious that a husband, by his sole presence, would put an end to this abuse of plays, music, supper parties and dissipation, if not disorder. This is the knot of the business." *Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated February 7th 1783.*

These explanations by the Bailli, attributing the lawsuit to the Marquis of Marignane's selfishness, are confirmed by the following extract from a letter written by the Countess of Mirabeau :—

"I do not cease saying and thinking that there is no comparison between a life of great dissipation, filled with what is termed noisy pleasures, and the delights of a well-united family circle, in which

be well aware that, in these days, he is always who succeeds without any scruples as to the choi means *."

each endeavours to assist in promoting the happiness of the c I have told you this a hundred times ; I tell it every day t father, who pretends that I shall feel *ennui* when I leave off th cala. I can assure you that he will much more regret not s me play, than I shall regret not playing. I think I am sure e (so strong is the self-love of a father with regard to his child I hope soon to convince him of it.

"I must, however, inform you that there is another per would be sorry to see me leave off acting in these plays, a person is my son. It is amusing to see him, when I am at acting all day long with the Count of Galiffet's daughter most singular part of it is that he retains the names of all we play. You would not suppose that the two parts with is most taken, are the Deserter and Alcindor, in ' *La Belle* Nothing amuses me so much as to see him strutting about wants to go upon the stage." *Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated July 19th 17*

At a subsequent period, the Bailli, to justify the C Mirabeau by stating her submission to her father's will follows:—

"Marignane or his agents have forced your daughter return to the place where her son died, and to act a ashes. The poor woman fainted three times, and co table. This had no effect upon those selfish men." *letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, 4th 1783.*

In the letter we have just quoted from the Count we find evidence that the irritation and animosity Marquis of Marignane in the lawsuit at Aix, had older and much more serious cause. The Mar

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Mirabeau dated November 6th 1781.

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take no direct part in bringing about the Countess of Mirabeau's return to her husband.

Such is my situation at present. Pray explain it properly to my father-in-law, and entreat him not to push these forms any further, as they will, ultimately, prove very prejudicial to my son."

The Marquis of Mirabeau, however, always and every where inflexible, had the entails registered without further ceremony *, as appears from the following passage in one of his letters :—

" I who am the great registrar of entails, have put it out of his power to injure his grandchildren much." *Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 25th 1782.*

This very natural and perfectly legal measure, but which the circumstances of the case, perhaps, rendered offensive, and which soon became useless, because the grandson died in less than three months after it took place, deeply offended the Marquis of Marignane, and increased to a hatred, afterwards fully displayed the aversion which had been insinuated into his mind against Mirabeau, who was doomed at all times to suffer from the faults of others no less than from his own †.

* " I further owe to myself, as the father of a family, the observance of a single form, that of registering the deeds of entail of the Marignane property. This is between ourselves. Those of my own property are registered ; and I will register theirs under their very noses." *Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 23rd 1778.*

The prudent and conciliating Bailli replied :—

" Does it not appear to you that you are placing the fingers of this young woman between two stones?—and that this measure is rather harsh ? " *Unpublished letter dated July 7th 1778.*

The Marquis again wrote :—

" Marignane is really bound by nothing but his daughter's dower ; and it is to bind him by the entails that I ought to act, and, therefore, will act. Compared with this object, a little animadversion is a mere trifle."

* The Marquis of Mirabeau pretended, however, that the resent-

“ I have no greater wish to throw myself at the feet of this troop of play-actors † to beg for posterity, than I have to beg a handmaiden Agar for my good angel. All that I ought to do is to put Honoré in the way; and faith, after that, let them settle their business if they can ‡.”

The Bailli was persuaded that mild measures would produce no effect.

“ What can you expect from those people? and on what side can you attack them? The wife has neither feeling, nor strength, and with her father, can have none. He is a good kind of man, and a man of honour, according to the French mode, and to the modern signification of the term; but he is subdued by an inertness that keeps him, every morning, four hours with his feet upon the fender, and the *Mercure*, or a novel, in his hand. The insipid life he leads appears sweet to him; he cannot bear the least turbu-

ment arising from the registering of the entails, had fallen upon himself alone.

“ When you are placed with your back against the wall and M. Loyal *, if necessary, advances, I alone shall have to bear the evil, as at the time when I had their entails registered.” *Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 1st 1782.*

* M. Loyal, the Huissier in the 5th act of Molière's ‘ Tartuffe.’

† Allusion to the private theatricals, in which the Countess took a part.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 12th 1781.

lence; and the incident of a rejunction would give a rude sweep to the roses upon which the good man loves to stretch his limbs. His grandson would not bear his name, and after him he cares not if the world is at an end*. As for his daughter, she is accustomed to be the great attraction of a very noisy society, all the members of which pass from the concert to the play—from the play to the ball—and from the ball to the four cardinal points, or wherever there is the least appearance of gaiety going on. She is the divinity of all these people; and she loves her pedestal, from which she would have to descend†.”

The Marquis of Mirabeau, to whose changes of intention the reader must be now accustomed, took the project at heart, for a moment, and announced a wish to act in person.

“ I am glad that Marignane neither replied to nor accepted, when Honoré was released, the offer I made him not to send my son to Provence without his sanction. When the time comes, M. Loyal shall advance in my name‡.

On a sudden he became irritated at the difficulties he encountered, which he attributed to his son.

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 23rd 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated February 13th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 1st 1782.

"All would yield to the Count's ascendancy, if he chose. At a distance every body disowns him, but near, no one can resist him except himself*. Difficult as matters appear, he may gain over his wife and his father-in-law, too, if he pleases: but the rascal will not; he only wants to be a country juggler, and to end his days in a dungeon†. If he had chosen to have his wife back, she would have come; but it required years of good conduct to obtain her, and gentleness and respect, instead of his offensive insinuations with regard to the life she leads, which is irreproachable‡."

The Bailli immediately replied —

" 'Years of good conduct!'—be it so. But what is to become of your posterity; for surely you would not ask this woman for issue when she is sixty years old. 'Gentleness!'—but how can he show gentleness to persons who will not see him, and do not even read his letters? 'Respect!'—with all my heart; and, perhaps

* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 21st 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated October 31st 1782. Some time afterwards, the Marquis, notwithstanding his brother's remonstrance, persisted in this unjust opinion, and wrote as follows:—

"This man obtained his wife when he chose to do so, and now he wishes for nothing but exposure and scandal; it is the air he breathes."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated January 23rd 1783.*

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 20th 1782.

you know better what is passing at Aix than those who are on the spot. But as you know that even the Holy Virgin herself was not beyond the reach of calumny, do you think that the fact of your daughter-in-law having acted plays, and received the news of her husband's condemnation to death, upon a stage erected over the remains of her child, has not reduced her, considering the point of honour among females, very near her husband's level * ? ”

Many days had not elapsed ere the Marquis no longer cared about bringing the husband and wife together.

“ I will not have any thing to do with a wife who was acting plays when they were trying her husband for his life ; and who has had no more consideration for my continued kindness, not even for remembrances of her on new-year's day, than for her husband. I have paid my reckonings, and my expenses are over. I have been long enough laughed at and betrayed, and henceforth I shall live for myself alone † .”

The Bailli persisted in his views.

“ When did you discover that such a suit had an appearance of the most disgusting interested motives ? But, in the first place, why, against my will, did you send me your son who is unfortunately yoked to the

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 30th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 10th 1782.

most silly and most narrow-minded fool of all her sex? Was it to stuff him with straw and put him in a glass case, or to expose us all three to the singular affront we have received? And besides, how long is it since people have become so very delicate at Paris, in the midst of all the possible social infirmities and decrepitude, and of the crumbling to pieces at your very feet of all good morals? Is the advantage of continuing your race of no consequence to you at present? It would be all very well if a man by separating from his wife could unmarried himself and take another; but he remains married, and his family is ruined for want of progeny. Is it in a country where law nobles, and quill drivers, and finance people, and speculators agree so well in benumbing heads and flattening hearts—is it in a country where the high patricians seek to yoke themselves with the daughters of publicans—that a man who claims his wife can be accused of sordid motives? What can be the object of his pretended sordid views, since his wife has nothing of her own, and the fortune, if it remains, will belong only to their children *? I have

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 26th 1782. This well-founded observation, and the explanations we have given elsewhere, prove that it was not, as was asserted, an immoderate desire to attain opulence, that induced Mirabeau to claim his wife, the whole of whose fortune was then reduced to a very moderate and ill paid annuity. How justly, therefore, may we censure those biographers who have urged the supposition that Mirabeau was governed by such base motives? And especially Peuchet who, Vol. I. pp. 126, 217, 218, 280, and Vol. II.

written to his wife pointing out the impossibility of a judicial separation ; for I am well acquainted with her hand writing, and have twenty letters from her, expressing great tenderness towards him, and written since they have lived asunder. Now you are aware that a single friendly letter does away with previous ill-usage, however well substantiated. But there never was any ill-usage on his part : she has confessed this to me a hundred times *."

" You are wrong to press this point," the Marquis replied. " Of what use are love declarations upon stamped paper ? Or what is a wife obtained by a judi-

p. 135, endeavours thus to account for a pretended plan which he imputes to Mirabeau, of carrying off his wife and taking her to Holland—probably to keep company with Sophie ! It is, however, but just to this writer to state that, though he very often looked but at one side of the question, he was in this instance misled by the Marquis of Mirabeau who, under date of September 5th 1777, wrote to the Marquis of Marignane :

" He (Mirabeau) has in fact no other expedition to undertake than that of carrying off his own wife, to make a hostage of her, and through her get all he can out of your property." *Case for the Countess of Mirabeau*, p. 32.

Peuchet may also have derived his information from judicial documents : for instance, from the Case just quoted, pp. 25, 87, *et seq.* But having, without authority, constituted himself the reporter to posterity, of all the crimes attached to Mirabeau's memory, before the tribunal of public opinion, he ought to have read and discussed the irresistible refutations of these calumnies, presented by Mirabeau himself in his " Reply to a calumnious Libel," &c. pp. 101—117.

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 8th 1782.

cial sentence *? All this resembles the quarrels of thieves and prostitutes. As for him, he will persevere, so that he make a noise. He is his mother's own child; and she has no objection to be hanged provided she is talked about †."

The Bailli and his nephew exhausted all possible means of conciliation. After writing the most respectful letters to the Marquis of Marignane, and the most affectionate to his daughter ‡, Mirabeau obtained replies at first cold and formal, then threatening and insulting.

"Not only did they insult us, but they did so even before we made any proposal; and before we went to Aix they had obtained opinions upon the separation, and retained in advance six months before § twenty

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 19th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated November 22nd 1782.

‡ Unpublished letters from the same to the same, dated October 22nd, November 3rd, 4th, 6th, and 10th, 1782; January 27th, and February 28th, 1783.

§ Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 8th 1783. Although these letters, some of which are master-pieces, are fully explanatory, extremely interesting, and remarkable in every respect, we do not insert them because they have been published elsewhere. See "Observations for the Count of Mirabeau," Aix, Joseph David, 1783, 4to, 73 pages, pp. 37—60. See also Vitry's Collection, pp. 260—280, 300—305; and Peuchet's Works, Vol. II. pp. 131, 132—135, 136, 137, 139—141, 155—157, 158—161.

advocates *, on purpose that we might not employ them †.”

They even took the most singular precautions to defend themselves against Mirabeau's violence, of which they affected to be in great dread.

“ The house is barricaded against the husband. They have placed a Cerberus to defend their doors ; a thing unknown and unheard of, as you well know, in this town ‡. They display the greater fear and shame

* This singular precaution, which showed so little confidence in the justice of their suit, and so little delicacy in the choice of means, caused Mirabeau some embarrassment. At first, he could obtain scarcely any other assistance than that of M. Jaubert, in whom he found great devotedness and courage, besides superior knowledge and ability. But this gentleman had little warmth of manner, and was not much accustomed to oral pleading, a circumstance which, doubtless more than any other, induced Mirabeau to plead his cause himself. Fortunately, from the very beginning of the suit, Mirabeau's irresistible ascendancy, the justice of his cause, and especially the dangerous situation in which he was placed by the manœuvres of his opponents, interested in his behalf a young advocate who at first spontaneously, but anonymously, supplied him with points and arguments, and afterwards openly lent him assistance. This unexpected aid was of great use to Mirabeau. But its consequences were still more useful to him ; for he formed a close intimacy with M. Pellenc, his generous auxiliary, whose probity, knowledge, and immense talents he soon appreciated ; and no sooner had Mirabeau taken his place in the Constituent Assembly than he sent for M. Pellenc, who became, as we shall hereafter show, the wisest of his advisers, the most intimate and skilful, as well as the most occupied of his fellow-labourers.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 6th 1783.

‡ Same letter.

because every body here is on his side, and I see in spite of myself, the affection felt towards him, by people of all classes, even by some of his creditors. I can perceive that the Marquis of Marignane's servants wish him to be reconciled to his wife, although an attempt has been made to induce them to swear to positive ill-usage on his part, which they refused to do *. One of them who is here, being told of a report that the chateau of Marignane was guarded by peasants to prevent Honoré's entrance, replied:—"Why, they could not have found such guards; and there is not a peasant who would not put him into his pocket to make him enter †." "

Soon after this, Mirabeau's letters were returned to him unopened, and every thing announced a speedy commencement of hostilities.

"I am informed that the Marignanes do every thing they can to prejudice the public against Honoré, and that all means are employed, even to retaining every

* Although this disgraceful attempt did not succeed, Mirabeau, sometime after, alluded to it, in the following spirited passage:—

"Evidence!—why what could they have done in this case? What is evidence by witnesses, after evidence by absurdity? Who does not know what a rich and powerful individual can effect upon a certain class of men? Who is unacquainted with the theory and facility of suborning without subornation?" *Observations on a calumnious libel*, &c. p. 183.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 10th 1783.

counsel in the place, exciting his creditors against him, and getting Castillon * to write denunciations against his 'Lettres de Cachet.' They go, purse in hand, begging for false witnesses, to prove imaginary ill-usage on his part ; and yet they are very certain—so is the public—so are we ourselves—that there never was any ill-usage. Proofs to the contrary are abundant. What then can be their object † ?”

* Leblanc de Castillon, Procureur General. This functionary hated Mirabeau, and denounced him several times to the Government. Peuchet has published one of these denunciations, vol. ii. p. 262 ; and we have others of the same description.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 15th 1783.

“ When you come to consider that, from the very beginning, we have offered to be put to the test by proof, did it even extend over a lapse of six months, or of one, two, or three years ; that they replied ‘ Never,’ to the twenty persons we employed to make the offer ; that they also declined several proposals for submitting the case to the arbitration of four military and law nobles ; that every day the insolence of their language increased, and they at length adopted the outrageous measure of refusing to allow of any explanation by the husband to the wife, and of returning the husband’s letters unopened—you will be of opinion that on our side the measure is more than overflowing.”—*Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 22nd 1783.*

We find in another letter an account of this act of decided hostility :—

“ All this was followed up, on Friday last, the first day of your allowing us a free range, by a piece of unparalleled violence. Your son sent his wife a letter. After many ridiculous ceremonies, this woman’s footman took charge of the letter and carried it to his mistress, who, very shortly after, sent it back without having broken the seal The short interval between the reception of the letter, and her

The Marquis persisted in his refusal to take an active part in the measures which his brother and son were pursuing.

"If you wish that the husband and wife should come together, which circumstance alone can perpetuate your house, you must prevent those people from saying what they do, by replying that at most you only tolerate Honoré's being here. But in this case, I request that you will put into good language only what I dictate to you; for I must say that your heart thinks a great deal too much. Your pen, after having drawn upon you much affliction, is the very thing that renders this reconciliation so difficult. Really, you commit yourself with every one by what you write; and all your misfortunes have been distilled from your pen, because you have written during your whole life according to the impulse of the moment, without reflecting that as circumstances change, so ideas may and ought to change*."

These observations, so just and true, perfectly explain the variations which we have shown to have been so frequent in the mind of the Marquis of Mirabeau, who did not attempt to deny them.

"Let it be said for the past, present, and future,

sending it back was filled up by a violent altercation between her and her father's advisers. She attempted to resist their will. They have rendered her father deaf and blind, and as impudent as themselves."—
Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 3rd 1782.

* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated December 3rd 1782.

that when I wrote, it was according to the then existing state of things. When these things became altered my letters were also altered. This to all appearance will be the case in future, when any change occurs *."

"In your place," answered the Bailli, "I should reply that people ought naturally to conclude that Honoré was here by your orders; that you have never interfered between him and his wife; that the discussion lies between themselves alone, and will, no doubt, terminate amicably; but that you cannot find fault with a husband for claiming his wife, because paternal authority does not reach so far. This would come the more seasonably, as it is possible that the wife is anxious a judgment should compel her to join her husband, Thus she would appear not to oppose her father's wishes. But Honoré would not accept her on those terms, if he did not think that fear alone now kept her from him. Lastly, his wife has acted much worse than he has done,—for during his sufferings, she was exhibiting herself upon the stage. And to tell you the truth, Honoré, though very culpable, has been still more unfortunate. I should never have done were I to adduce all the evidence that proves this fact. Therefore, will you have the vindication, or not? Make up your mind. For my own part, I am quite indifferent on the subject †.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 3rd 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 3rd 1782.

But nothing could remove the father's prejudices, and he lost no opportunity of showing them.

"As for your brother, he is as infatuated as usual. I never before saw so many respectable people become surety for a man who so little deserves it. It is the same thing at Pontarlier, Besançon, Aix, Mirabeau, and Marignane: all join in the same tune, to such a degree that one knows not which to listen to in this concert of panegyrists *."

The Bailli insisted upon a reply to his question.

"What is really your decided will with regard to your son? Why did he come to Provence?—for I warned you a hundred times that the huissier must be made to act, and now you will no longer admit that our back is against the wall. So long as Honoré remained under your own charge, you sang his praises, though with a reserve which the past naturally inspired. Since you have lost sight of him, people have persuaded you that he is a frightful monster. You pretend that you forbade a thousand times his having recourse to a huissier. If so, you had only to inform me of it in time, and I would have replied that, in such case, his journey to Provence was not only useless but ridiculous, to say no worse †.

"I am well aware that in this country, your son is

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated January 17th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 25th 1782.

accused of having a fiery temper; but nobody can be mentioned as having suffered by it; and people seem to think that if he suffers much longer under this excommunication, it would be renouncing his wife, and admitting the charge attempted to be fastened upon him with regard to her, but of which he is certainly not guilty. He terms such a thing ‘dishonouring himself;’ and, in fact, it would be leaving the whole province in the persuasion that he ill-used his wife; and that his opponents have real cause of complaint, otherwise he would not remain inactive after four months of overtures which, far from doing good, have only roused angry feelings, and led to all sorts of insult, addressed as much to you and me, as to himself.

“With regard to his alleged misdeeds, I can see only one: that of having got into debt; but, although he has never stated that he was urged on by his wife, yet in the trades-people’s accounts, often three quarters of the amount, and always two-thirds, are for things purchased to give to her. Surely this cannot be termed ill-usage*.”

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 4th 1783. The Bailli recurs to the subject in the following passage:—

“What I have seen relative to your son’s debts, is that three quarters of the amount is for presents to his wife. What is still stronger, is that some are for presents to his father-in-law—that is to say, bills from booksellers for works received by M. de Marignane,” &c. *Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated January 27th 1783.*

"I have no alteration to suggest in your plans; but, as you have sent me your son, I wish to know whether it is for the purpose of my boiling or roasting him? Do you wish that he should be reconciled to his wife?—and that he should pay his debts? Say yes, or no—for I am not of an age to be trifled with any longer. Think and desire; but, in God's name, decide by yourself, and take no female advice, unless it be Saillanette's*."

The Marquis, however, persisted in rejecting the means after he had determined upon obtaining an end.

"I have just received your last letter, which according to the tertian ague that pervades your letters ever since you have had a ward, was necessarily one inflicting correction. And, indeed, it tells me home truths in pretty plain terms. I shall say nothing in reply, except that you are mistaken in pretending to be more vexed than your elder brother. If this be so, it is

We even find the fact admitted by the Marquis.

"The separation of property was the less necessary, and even the less proper, because the greater part of the debts were contracted for supplies of things for a lady's use." *Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 12th 1777.*

This testimony completely confirms Mirabeau's assertion in the justification addressed to his father, March 2nd 1778. *Correspondence from Vincennes*, vol. I. p. 321. See also the Cases published by Mirabeau during the law proceedings between the Countess of Mirabeau and himself.

* Unpublished letters from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 6th and February 7th 1783.

lucky that contradiction remained at a distance, or you would have thrown it out of the window. Be that as it may, you call upon me positively to say whether or not I will have a lawsuit. As you are determined to have an answer *yes* or *no*, I say *no*, positively *no*, for the present *no*. I have hold of each end of the business, but hold only by cutting reeds, thorny branches, and red-hot iron-bars. As the public love five-act tragedies and dramas, let them ask Molé for some: I and mine have been and are still too much exposed to the public gaze. My own suit still makes a noise, and my name is each day bawled out in Court. Now, I am anxious not to increase this universal question: ‘shall we never hear anything else but about that unruly race of the Mirabeaus *?’

“ You and I would require to have the shoulders of Atlas, to support the weight of all these attacks upon our house. Besides, I warned you that we might look for the most insulting defence; and if the stupidity of servants have appeared to you insults from their masters, it will be much worse when the stream of charges and accusations and even calumnies, which are always the concomitants of causes of this description, begins to flow. It is your duty to laugh at this progress of human passion, and to keep back a man who, accustomed as he is to defy the whole world, and to

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated January 27th 1783.

turn his back upon reprisals, will find it a new thing to be told to his face, and to hear denounced to the public, all that has been said of him behind his back *."

Both the uncle and the nephew were well aware that the counsel of their adversaries were preparing to publish a very insulting statement, the principal materials of which were taken from the letters written by the Marquis of Mirabeau against his son. The Marquis, on being written to by his brother, on this matter, replied—

"Yes, yes, I warn you, and very strongly, and by duplicate and by triplicate, that they have letters written by me, and many too, in which I treat this newly-manufactured Cato with great disrespect; and in which, among other verses in his just praise, I call him what he then was, a consummate rascal, whom it was expedient to withdraw from the sight and remembrance of man. Recollect who we were, and what our ancestors were; and then, when these letters appear, you will consider and decide whether or not I judged him too harshly. If he fancies that this evidence, given by a father against a son then thirty years old, does not redound to his honour, but proves injurious to his cause, let him consider that he himself chose to run these risks. If he wishes for copies of these letters, in order to weigh and enjoy the savour of their contents,

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 13th 1783.

I kindly offer them to him. I know that all this matters not with regard to his wife ; but *molti pochi fanno un assai* *.”

It was in this way that the Marquis spoke of the letters he had written against his son : and both the uncle and the nephew well knew, and justly feared the effect these letters would produce. Thus the latter exclaimed on a subsequent occasion, when speaking of his wife, to the persons by whom he was beset :—

“ Hatred between married people !—defamation between the father-in-law and the son-in-law—between the father-in-law and the daughter-in-law—between the father and the son ! Good God, what a system ! You, who ought to rush between your father and your husband, keep them back, and disarm them—you, who ought, in your own pacific hands, the only pledge of their alliance, to join theirs, you strive to sever them still wider !—you shake between them the torch of the

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 11th 1783. In corroboration of this extract, we transcribe a short passage from a letter written by Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant on the 17th of November preceding :—

“ All the difficulties we meet with here from the Marignanes, whose twenty-three advocates told them point blank that they had not the shadow of a legal ground for demanding a separation, proceed from a dozen of my father’s letters, in which he describes me as the greatest scoundrel that ever drew breath, and from two others besides, in which he declares, upon his honour, that he will never suffer me to claim Madame de Mirabeau.” Vitry, to whom Mirabeau wrote at the same time, has quoted, p. 285, part of this passage.

furies. Stay your hand, and save yourself from eternal remorse! Stop!—for death is but the middle of a long life, and the Supreme Judge, who weighs your counsels, will also weigh your weakness *.”

Mirabeau's fears, with regard to the use intended to be made of his father's letters, were but too well founded. The numerous extracts from them given in this work, especially in that part of it in which we relate the principal faults he had committed, and his flight, may enable the reader to form some notion of the dreadful violence of the letters addressed to the Marquis of Marignane, by a father, such as we have shown the Marquis of Mirabeau to have been †. These letters were full of pretended facts, plans of spoliation, violence, poisoning, murder—in short, of all the wild exaggerations and atrocious fictions which the credulous animosity of the Marquis had induced him to believe,—for he was always led away by his first impulse on every occasion. Whatever may be thought of these productions, to such as would form a just notion of them, it would be necessary to read what neither our plan nor our limits allow of our inserting in this work, namely, the extracts contained in the statements published by Mirabeau's opponents, at the

* Observations upon a calumnious Libel, p. 44.

† A discontented father, whose anger is never measured by his expressions, whose delight is hyperbole, always looked upon the son, whose conduct raised his ire, as the basest of men.”—*Observations upon a calumnious Libel, &c.*, p. 118.

time of the lawsuit, of which we are here giving account—statements containing abominable calumnies which have outlived an ephemeral litigation, and furnished, more perhaps than the falsified Vincennes letters, the materials for a great number of pamphlets published during the Revolution of 1789, as also for several pretended biographies which are nothing but infamous libels. We here denounce only the barbarous indifference with which the Marquis of Mirabeau received notice of the approaching publication of his letters—a publication, however, which, as we shall hereafter show, strongly affected this man, whose feelings were, in fact, as acute as he was himself harsh and haughty in form. Beyond this, we limit ourselves to proving, that six years before these letters served the Marquis of Marignane as a pretence for openly declaring himself the enemy of his son-in-law, these same letters had induced him to join in the severity shown by the Marquis of Mirabeau towards his son. The proof of this lies in the following passage :—

“ In consequence of the challenge sent to Valbelle, Marignane has written to the minister, in the strongest terms, concerning this scoundrel, giving his reasons for acceding in every point to the measures taken permanently*.”

* Letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis du Sailant, dated September 7th 1777. A single passage will suffice to

We return to our narrative. The Bailli, confounded by his brother's tergiversations, was discouraged for a moment.

"The last letters I have received from the Bailli, are evidently below par; he has not by any means the same tone of assurance. Until now, it has been impossible to bend the loins or bear down the head of that man; but his triumphant cock-a-hoop will place him upon the saddle again *."

The Bailli insisted upon an ultimatum.

show the advantages which Mirabeau's adversaries derived from these letters.

"But what, it is already asked, can be proved by letters written against a son by a father, perhaps unjust, but at all events, irritated against this son?

"What can be proved by such letters? That it would be atrocious, even under this supposition, to impute as a crime to Madame de Mirabeau the profound impression they have made upon her mind; that the Mirabeau family are bound to respect a repugnance produced by themselves; and that this latter family have lost the right of forcing the will of a wife whose mind they have seduced, and whose affections they have destroyed by their own manœuvres."

"After describing a son and a nephew in the blackest colours; after communicating the most fatal and alarming facts confidentially to a timid and sensitive woman, could they reasonably expect to bring about a second time a cohabitation which they so long strived to render impossible?

"No!—in such a case, the law, whilst it deplored the imposture of the father, would be in no hurry to pronounce upon the fate of the children. It would never give up to misfortune and despair, a wife too well justified in fearing every thing."—*Case for Counsel's opinion for the Countess of Mirabeau, &c.* p. 92.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated April 17th 1783.

“As it is high time to *correspond*, and you do nothing but *respond*; and as, by right, you have right to direct the line of conduct we are to pursue; and although I might find reason to complain of having been made seriously to commit myself—a thing, I trust, I have not deserved—I will, nevertheless, sacrifice my repugnance, on condition that you write an ostensible letter to your son, in which you forbid him positively to begin proceedings; because we can then yield with a good grace *. Take care that the part I play here does not become worse than that of a buffoon. I know that I exemplify the fable of the miller, his son, and the ass; and in whatever manner I, or we, act, *laudatur ab his, culpatur ab illis* †.”

The Marquis began to perceive that he could not always resist.

“I am persecuted here about the pleadings; and I shall ultimately loosen the bridle, as I can no longer keep it tight, which will be the end of the matter. This gentleman, if he chose, would not fail to bring forward plenty of reasons for being humiliated, he and his graces; but provided they make people talk about them, even on the occasion of their being whipped and branded, they would still be delighted ‡. My brother

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 11th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated February 21st 1783.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis du Saillant, dated February 11th 1783.

is always as infatuated as ever, and sticks to his game. I have said all, having sanctioned the lawsuit; but what makes my brother angry is, that he would wish it to be a spontaneous sanction, not one forced from me,—but I cannot leap that ditch*.”

The Marquis, however, thought that the Marignane family would feel some scruples in publishing his confidential letters.

“Honour in those people!” the Bailli replied; “whenever you hear the statue of Hannibal at the Tuileries, declare that it is flattered at being placed by the side of that of Cæsar, you will find communicability between a good and honest heart, and a gizzard absolutely and exclusively personal†.”

It has just been shown that the Marquis of Mirabeau expressed no regret at the letters he had formerly written against his son, and which the Marignane family intended to use, and soon afterwards did use, as a terrible engine of defamation against Mirabeau. The Bailli declared to his brother, that the threats held out to this effect would soon be realized.

“I have seen some of your letters concerning the proof sheets of their forthcoming publication. I could not believe my eyes. Where did you hear all you have stated, and of which you say I have evidence—which

* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated February 17th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 19th 1783.

is not true? The demon of scribomania must have possessed you to a strange degree when you wrote in that style. I could not have believed that they, whom I considered honest people, would have published such things * !”

The Marquis, however, was not to be shaken by this intelligence.

“ I am like David, who lamented his son’s rebellion, and then his punishment. But what would you have me do? All means are lawful to rabid litigators. We must drink this fresh cupful, and the shame will not be ours any more than the crime.†”

But, strange to say!—the very man who had hardened his heart beforehand to meet such a publication—the very man who, in the numerous statements he had published against his wife, did not spare her any more than she spared him—the Marquis of Mirabeau, himself, was offended at the proposal made to him, to use the most natural means of defence for his son, by opposing to the demand of the son’s wife for a separation, evidence of the tender attachment she evinced towards her husband at the very time of the pretended ill-usage she alleged against him.

“ These letters,” wrote the Bailli, “ do honour to both, as they are letters from a mistress to a fond

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 26th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 7th 1783.

lover, rather than a correspondence between man and wife*."

"With regard to the Countess's letters," the Marquis replied, "I have always considered letters a confidential deposit; and that, therefore, a letter addressed to me ought never to appear in a court of justice, except with my consent. In my own business, I might have made use of letters, but never would. I beg that in this, you will take compassion upon my old-fashioned principles†. As for what you say about publishing the letters, expressing affection, which your nephew has received from his wife, I know: 1st, that the gentleman has no modesty; 2ndly, that an internal feeling tells him that he is not exactly formed to be kissed; 3rdly, that if St. Vergogna was never the holy patroness of such people, she was always ours; 4thly, that every time I have seen such fragments in law cases, I have been disgusted with them, and considered that they rendered him despicable who adduced them;

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 16th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated January 7th 1783. The Bailli writes as follows:—

"I do take compassion upon your 'old-fashioned principles' with regard to letters, as I cannot do otherwise. You apply those principles to persons who make an undue use of your letters. I have never had a taste for killing any body; but if I could not defend myself in any other manner, I would kill whomsoever attempted to kill me."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 15th 1783.*

5thly, that marriage is a bond of honour and chastity; and that if there be the least passion in such extracts, it is shaming the wife, and deflowering her daughters *."

What more could we say to show the irresistible influence of the Marquis's prejudices over his mind, when they induced him, even to the detriment of his own views, to oppose his son's measures? Anxious to reach the denouëment of this deplorable litigation, we extract, in closing the present Book, only a single paragraph, showing the period when, after so much caution and attempts at conciliation, hostilities really began.

"Our adverse parties, driven to extremities by the persons by whom they were beset: namely, collaterals, dinner-eaters, supper-eaters, parasites, flatterers, players, &c., have filled the measure to the brim. I do not conceal from you, that your son kept himself under controul much longer than I did: at length, we both loosened the reins, gave the spur, and off we started. He filed his petition, and now we are footing it away at a great rate †."

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 26th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 3rd 1783. On the 28th of February, Mirabeau filed his petition for an injunction to his wife to return and live with him. On the 8th of March, the Countess filed a counter-petition, demanding that the injunction prayed for by her husband should not be

granted. Mirabeau filed a second petition, and had a copy of it served upon his wife, and at the same time, published a statement entitled, "Observations for the Count of Mirabeau, &c." (Aix, Joseph David, 1783, 4to. 73 pages). In this production Mirabeau displays the most affectionate delicacy towards his wife; and the first half of it is chiefly made up of extracts from, or transcriptions of, thirty-five most affectionate letters which she wrote to him before they separated, this separation being caused solely by Mirabeau's being thrown into prison, whither his wife refused to bear him company.

BOOK XIII.

EVERY thing now tended to give great notoriety to the pending suit between the two first families in the province, the inhabitants of which were divided into two parties, each adhering to one or other of the litigants. In Provence, the passions and feelings are warm, and no individual sets up a claim to be considered either neuter or impartial. This led to some very curious incidents of which we have an interesting account written by Mirabeau himself, but never published, although he originally intended it for publication. But he afterwards altered his mind, because he found that he had been involuntarily led into speculations upon public law, which bore an undue proportion to this subject, which thence became mere accessory matter, and did not therefore answer his purpose. And finding as he went on, that his views with regard to the defects and errors of the law, and the proceedings in courts of justice, had assumed immense development under his

pen, he reserved what he had written to introduce it in a future historical and theoretical dissertation, a specimen of which we shall insert in another part of this work, when we come to speak of his writings on speculative politics*.

In the first of the letters composing this work, Mirabeau thus expresses himself—

“People go to law here as they do everywhere else: they go to law for property; they go to law for vanity and for honour; and what is still more strange, a man goes to law to obtain leave to see his wife, who is not

* The autograph manuscript, in our possession, bears this title:—
“Letters written by a former Magistrate to a friend, upon the Law-suit of the Count of Mirabeau.”

These letters, three in number, are dated March 8th and 29th, and April 10th 1783, and they contain a hundred and five pages. Mirabeau, no doubt, alluded to this work when he said:—

“I see and know every thing. The field of all these intrigues is too confined for it to be necessary for me to describe them. But I give notice that a day will come when the whole nation shall know their history, and my voice, long tried in the utterance of bold truths, shall divulge every particular of the most odious plots that ever disgraced the legal profession and the temple of justice.” See p. 3, of a publication entitled, “Reply to Madame de Mirabeau’s pleading, &c., of the 10th of June 1783;” page 3, of “Observations by the Count of Mirabeau upon certain parts of his Case;” and page 14, of the prefaces to “The Case of the Count of Mirabeau, suppressed, at the moment of its publication, by especial order of the Keeper of the Seals, and republished from respect to the King and to justice, together with a conversation on this subject between the Keeper of the Seals and the Count of Mirabeau.” One volume 8vo. 1784.

judicially separated from him, to speak to her, and to offer her explanations.

“ This is a literal fact : and such a case is now pending at Aix, constituting a judicial problem of immense difficulty, a law-suit of very great importance, and even a party question.

“ It appears singular to reasonable people, that litigation concerning the affairs of married life should be carried on in courts of justice, and such matters submitted to the tortuous intrigues of lawyers, and the inexhaustible resources of chicanery. Nor is it less singular that a husband, whose wife has preferred no judicial complaint against him, should be obliged to apply to the law courts for access to her presence. But the strangest thing of all is, that among the thousands of works on jurisprudence in our libraries, neither a law nor even a theory is to be found, fixing with clearness and precision, the rights of married people with regard to each other's person.

“ More than twenty millions of inhabitants are living in France ; all are interested in the laws of matrimony, if not as husbands and wives, at least as children and relatives. Nevertheless, neither magistrates nor citizens have any precise knowledge of the power of the conjugal tie. Each understands and draws it closer, according to his affections, his prejudices, or his interest.

“ It is really curious to hear how such questions are

treated by husbands, wives, young people, old people, priests, judges, and barking lawyers. No two opinions are alike among individuals of the same sex, age, condition and species.

“The solemn and novel case now pending here, opens a vast field to debate, and must constitute a distinct epoch. Both parties will apparently explain the principles upon which they proceed. The decision will make a noise, and will be rigidly examined. It may, perhaps, lead to a law which, at the end of the eighteenth century, will at length specify in this country, what marriage really is.

“The husband who claims his wife, is one who was considered dead as regards his civil rights. His appearance caused almost as great a fright as that of a spectre interrupting the revels of a brilliant party. The wife’s circle of friends have taken the alarm; they fear being dispersed for ever, and they affectionately close round the amiable woman who is their delight. Their charming queen is unwilling to awake, and end her dream of a too happy widowhood; and those who profit by her slumbers, rock her to prolong them.

“This husband who has risen from the dead, is called the Count of Mirabeau. His destiny is a never-ending tempest, and his life a romance. Perhaps I may sketch his portrait some day; it is now sufficient to tell you that he stepped out of his grave at Vin-

cennes two years ago; and after having caused a sentence to be quashed which condemned him to be beheaded for abduction of the wife of the old President Monnier, he has now applied to the courts of justice to get back his own wife.

“ This step was little apprehended at first because he was known to be heavily chained, and tightly bound. Loaded with debts, the consequence of his misconduct in early life—stricken by prejudices consequent upon this misconduct, and more especially by the scheming and officious tales of those interested in his ruin—surrounded by enemies—injured, it is said, by his own father—obnoxious to the government, who attribute to his pen a work, purporting to be a posthumous writing upon *Lettres de Cachet* and state prisons, in which the truth must more than once have made the viziers and semi-viziers turn pale * :—he comes to a province in which he has few relatives left, few secret and not one avowed friend, to strive against the most influential family that it contains—against an individual at Aix, who does the honours of the town, and passes for giving the most delightful parties, and for having the most powerful friends and the best cook in the place. The resuscitated

* This work had appeared four months previously, that is to say in the beginning of November 1782. We shall give an account of it in Book XIV, as well as of the other published and unpublished works, written by Mirabeau in his youth.

husband must place great reliance on the justice of his cause and the impartiality of his judges to venture upon such a proceeding. But even under this supposition, it is difficult to account for his wish to have back a wife who cared nothing about him during his long misfortunes, but spent in pleasures and festivities those days which he passed in a dungeon.

"Many persons are surprised that he who has been accused of carrying off the wife of another, should peaceably allow his own wife to be taken and kept from him without any right or authority. If he is attached to her, as people suppose—a little gratuitously perhaps—why does he not seize her person? If he is not attached to her, wherefore does he desire to get her back? This riddle will be solved some day or other;—meanwhile, the suit is going on. Every body is reading with the greatest eagerness a statement published by this extraordinary man, of whom I hear daily so many strange, and even disgusting stories, that he could not, without infamy, dispense with a judicial inquiry, as by it alone he can clear his character.

"This first statement of his, which he has entitled 'Observations for the Count of Mirabeau,' is nothing more than a collection of his wife's letters to him, written at a period since which the husband and wife have never met. This collection assuredly forms a novel species of defence in a suit for a separation brought by a wife against her husband, as these letters

breathe the deepest and most lively tenderness. The Count Mirabeau has published them without any other comment than the following sentence, very energetic in its simplicity, which he has added to each letter transcribed :—

“ ‘ AND MADAME DE MIRABEAU HAS NEVER SEEN, SINCE SHE WROTE THE ABOVE LETTER, THE HUSBAND FROM WHOM IT IS NOW PRETENDED THAT SHE WISHES TO BE SEPARATED ! ’

“ The epigraph to the statement is—

“ ‘ MAY GOD SOON BRING US TOGETHER AGAIN, FOR WE ARE NOT FORMED TO BE ASUNDER. ’

“ The letters are thus headed : ‘ Letter from the Countess of Mirabeau to her husband, who has never seen her since she wrote it. ’

“ The epigraph and the sentence under each letter, have been very successful. Good people say : THE QUESTION IS DECIDED BY THESE LETTERS. But those who are versed in judicial manœuvring maintain, on the contrary, that the Count of Mirabeau will certainly lose his cause ; because they say Madame de Mirabeau would not plead against evidence unless she was sure of a party sufficiently strong to secure the victory. The instigators of these proceedings are, for the most part, unacquainted with the Count of Mirabeau, except from hearsay. Perhaps they hope he will lay himself open by some rash or angry measure. Be that as it may, people eagerly read his wife’s letters

which are well written, full of feeling and thought, and—what is more remarkable in such a litigation between man and wife—very honourable to both.

“ They prove beyond a doubt that Madame de Mirabeau was well pleased with her cohabitation; that she quitted her husband at his own request and for the purpose of serving him; and that she deeply lamented his absence from her. Now, this separation, which was to have lasted only a few days, has filled a lapse of eight years; and these letters further prove that she has pressed her husband twenty times to summon her to him, and that she never refused to join him until he lately claimed her return. Not only did she treat him as a cherished lover, worthy of being so,—and this at a period since which they have never seen each other, but on her husband’s writing to her in harsh and angry terms concerning her stay in Paris, she made use of the following words in a letter which she sent to him in excuse of her conduct :—

“ ‘ I FEAR NOT TO SUBMIT TO THE DECISION OF YOUR OWN TRIBUNAL; IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN JUST TOWARDS ME.’

“ The correspondence appears to have been brought to a close by the anger of the husband, who being then confined by the King’s order, vainly demanded his wife.

“ Such is the necessary consequence of these letters, which form a strange contrast with those written by

both parties, since the Count of Mirabeau's return to Provence."

We have considered it our duty to suppress in our transcriptions from these letters some parts that are merely simple narrative, else we should greatly exceed the limits we have marked out for this subject, and produce the same disproportion that Mirabeau found in his work. On the other hand, notwithstanding the ability and logic, the erudition, certainly unexpected, and the admirable art which Mirabeau displayed in his statements published on the occasion of this suit, and which were still more eloquent, if possible, than those published at Pontarlier, we shall not follow the example of Peuchet and Vitry, who copied, one a hundred and fifty, the other two hundred pages, from the general collection of these productions, which, however, had obtained a very extensive circulation. Being firmly resolved, when under no compulsion from necessity, not to compile from nor reproduce documents already published, we shall content ourselves with relating, in a brief form, the principal incidents of this lawsuit, to which we shall add a very small number of extracts from the unpublished family correspondence.

We have already stated that the petitions of both parties were filed February 28th, and March 7th and 8th; and that Mirabeau immediately afterwards published "Observations" written in the most flattering and conciliatory tone towards his wife. On the 20th of

March, with that confidence in himself belonging to his character, and which was derived from an internal sense of his power rather than from the delusion of vanity—a confidence which attended and served him in every circumstance of his life, even political, he appeared before the judgment seat and pleaded his own cause. It is mentioned by his uncle in the following terms:—

“The Count pleaded yesterday; and, as you may well suppose, the court was crowded *. Marignane was there. At first he laughed; but in the middle he bent his head, and I am assured that he at last wept, as did the greater half of the audience †. Marignane said on

* Portalis, who swore he would not plead, appeared at the bar. He brought with him, as assistants, the Marquis of Marignane, and some of the Coryphees of his party. The audience were as numerous as the court could possibly contain, and they would have been suffocated if the lieutenant had not allowed the windows to be burst open. The Count of Mirabeau had no one with him but Lord Peterborough and two other English friends; not a single Frenchman daring to appear by his side. *Unpublished account by Mirabeau, under the title of “Letters written by a former Magistrate,” &c.*

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 21st 1783.

“The Marquis of Marignane was greatly embarrassed. It is singular that he did not seem aware how critical his situation was, and how immoral the course he was pursuing. At first he looked at his son-in-law with a sneer; soon afterwards he turned away his head; he then bent it towards the ground, and his features underwent a change. He at length appeared so deeply affected, that the impression among the audience was that he was about to rise, embrace his son-in-law, and take him home with him. This was the general wish; and it appears to me that such a proceeding would have been ho-

leaving the court:—‘ He pleaded with great gentleness and moderation ;’ and in fact, this man, formed for out-of-the-way things, found out the secret of administering a strong dose of flattery to his father-in-law, and his wife, at the same time that he made them appear absurd *. Your son forced from him a confession that he had evinced decency and moderation, adding that the only thing wanting was truth. But to speak candidly, every disinterested person was of opinion that this *finale* might have been omitted †.”

Mirabeau’s personal appearance in court greatly displeased his father.

“ So then, the Count is at his apogee ! for of all the

nourable to both, especially to M. de Marignane, who would have left to his son-in-law the glory of speaking well, and reserved to himself that of doing well. But so decisive a step was not in the nature of so weak-minded a man.” *Unpublished account already mentioned.*

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 22nd 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 24th 1783.

Many people blame the Count for making this public display. But he seems greatly to have gained by it ; and to these censurers it might be said, “ *Vous êtes orfèvre, M. Josse.*” The number of the pleader’s adherents increased tenfold ; he seems to have kindled great enthusiasm. * * * * The Count’s pleading was applauded by a general clapping of hands, from which he attempted to escape, but it pursued him to his carriage, to which he was almost carried. You may easily suppose that these unfortunate clappings of hands seemed to M. de Marignane so many buffets applied to his cheeks. *Unpublished account already mentioned.*

facilities and jovialities that Providence has placed within his reach, he always has recourse to the most noisy. He pleads his cause in person; he publishes Cases, and no doubt, people tell him that all this is very meritorious, and that he is as superior to his fellows, the other dealers in words I mean, as stars are to wild poppies. And, seeing the rapidity and rarity of individuals of his species, he adds, *in petto*, that he must be a prodigy. He goes speechifying with his hat upon his head, and they all tell him that it is best so to do; but I wish his judges were not men, and that his voice had the same power as that of the united Greeks, when their shouts of joy, in the name of the freedom announced by the Romans, made the birds fall from the sky. But I fear that he will reap no other benefit from it than the Dutch compliment paid to Cardinal Polignac, when he made a fine speech at St. Gertruidenberg: ‘In truth it seems that the reverend clergyman has received a very good education *.’

“ Although I had some difficulty to stomach the idea of the grandson of our father, whom we have seen pass along the *course*, every body there, high and low, taking off their hats to him—although, as I say, I did not exactly relish the thought of this grandson appearing at the bar of the court, disputing their practice with

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 23rd 1783.

the dealers in chicanery ; I thought to myself a little while after, that Louis XIV would be somewhat more surprised at seeing the wife of his second successor clad in a peasant's garb with an apron tied before her, without retinue, or pages, or a single attendant, running through the palace and across the terraces, telling the first young puppy she meets to hand her on, and he handing her no further than the bottom of the stairs. Other times, other customs * !”

The Marquis positively refused to believe in his son's moderation.

“ If this man, ferocious even in his caresses, could reform his harsh and cutting mode of speech, and

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 26th 1782.

Whilst the Marquis was venting his ill humour in this angry passage, suggested by the amusements of the young queen of France, Mirabeau, by a singular coincidence, paid the latter a homage, the occasion of which was the presence of the archduke of Milan, brother of Marie Antoinette. “ Who among you,” said he, “ if he would consecrate the living image of justice, and embellish it with all the charms of beauty, would not take the august effigy of our queen ? A fortunate chance here shows us her adored features, retraced by nature itself, the greatest, the only painter for feeling hearts. We have all, with delight, caught at this striking resemblance ; and great is the confidence my heart derives from it ! What happier prognostic could there be for this solemn cause, which must astonish those whose supreme rank only displays the more vividly their modest habits, and the concord and domestic virtues of which they offer such affecting examples !” *Reply to the pleading of the Countess of Mirabeau, p. 7.*

transform his beautiful style into my unformed style, it would be much better for him *."

Soon after this he wrote—

" This gentleman is just where he wished to be, that is to say, in a situation to be able to howl and to scribble; but he will lose all in a single speech, and then it will be said, as you will see, that I and those about me, have twisted his neck †. All is my own fault, if I am to believe my brother, who gives me some rude buffets by each post. I should never have thought his mind so capable of being shaken, and of forgetfulness and passion; or that he would have seen only through the eyes of that fellow, by whose rapacious and turbulent notions he is harassed and propelled ‡."

The Marquis now believed or pretended to believe, that Mirabeau was not sincere in his wish for a restitution of conjugal rights.

" I tell you that he feels a repugnance to live with his wife. His only object has been to make a noise, hoping thereby to deceive the public, and pass himself off for a saint. I well knew that he was not sincere, because the flash of lightning which blackens even white clouds, also shows the blackness of the others §.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau, to Madame du Saillant, dated April 22nd 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 18th 1783.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 29th 1783.

§ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated April 8th 1783.

“Never in your life,” replied the Bailli, “have you believed in proper time, although you have often said, ‘the Bailli is always right.’” How often must the reader have made the same reflection !

“You think me prejudiced, but I can assure you that your son had the greatest wish to have back his wife ; thanks, however, to a set of letters not written by you but coming from your house, it was known that you would not interfere in the business, and people believed what pleased them most. He has been insulted in a thousand different ways. Unless you deem him physically mad, what interest could he have in bringing himself before the public in this manner ? In these proceedings, I myself cannot help perceiving, as plainly as day-light at noon in the month of June, that, during the whole course of his cohabitation with his wife, he evinced much more moderation in essential points than I should have done. Think you that he has not felt the chastisement inflicted upon him ? I know nothing of your figurative style, which you inflict upon me by far too often for my comprehension. What do you mean by lightning blackening or whitening clouds ? . . . I know not what this can have to do with the matter ; but I know that he has a due sense of his situation, and will in spite of himself, and without being able to prevent it, extinguish his race, because that which exists in a marriage contract cannot be retracted.

“But let me tell you, that knowing you as I do, I never thought you could have written so many letters

of this description to a man*, of whose selfishness and narrow mind you were well aware. You knew him to be one of those who care for nothing but the pleasures and amusements of the moment, to whom domestic and social consequences are nothing, and who, as you said of this one yourself, are those true inhabitants of cities, those men of the Eclogue, for whom the heavens and space form but a circumference of three yards. You assert that I have proof of all you have written, but I really have none, not even of the very least thing†

Mirabeau's demand of "provisional reunion," was granted by a judgment of the 24th of March, which ordered the young wife to return to her husband in three days, or else retire to a convent and receive his visits there.

"Having gained the provisional judgment, we proposed either that she should go to a convent, where she should not see her husband, unless she sent for him; but on condition that she should receive no other visiter whatever, except her father,—or else that she should remain at her father's house and see her husband there. Both alternatives were peremptorily rejected, and a proposal made in return, that her husband should suffer himself to be condemned by a *decree of expedi-*

* The Marquis of Marignane.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated July 15th 1783.

ency, and renounce his rights as a husband. Perhaps I might have consented to this, if they had fixed a limit of one, two, or even three years; but it was for ever. Meanwhile they made a great splutter about the terrible statement they were going to publish; they showed your letters to many people; they uttered calumnies against your son and even against ourselves. Marignane went so far as to say that lawsuits were natural to us—you against your wife, and I against my niece*, (although with regard to this latter and me, there never was any lawsuit between us). But we might answer him, that his daughter wanted to be separated, and that she is the daughter of a separated wife†, and the grand-daughter of a separated wife‡."

Threats of a defamatory publication were made long before the instance began, and the most bitter animosity was displayed. All this was the more unjust to Mirabeau, because, after the publication of his "*Observations*," written in a conciliatory spirit, having made in open court a speech very honourable to his wife, to

* A petition was filed against the Bailli by Madame de Cabris, who wrongfully pretended that he was bound to supply her with a supplemental dower.

† The Marchioness of Marignane, had been separated from her husband more than five and twenty years.—*Case for the Grand Council, suppressed at the moment of its publication, &c.*, p. 149.

‡ Madame de Maliverney lived in a state of separation before she became a widow.

prevent the effect of this speech from being confined to the limited audience in whose presence it was delivered, he had it printed and distributed throughout the province*.

All these attempts at an amicable arrangement were of no avail.

"At last we have gone so far as to propose a fresh arbitration of four noblemen, or four magistrates; but Gassier has lost both his time and his trouble †."

With whatever indifference the Marquis of Mirabeau may first have regarded the threat to publish his letters, he was soon brought to think otherwise; not by the persuasion of others—for he was never known

* Two other publications, equally moderate, followed; the first was, "*A summary of the Demand presented by the Countess of Mirabeau to stay Proceedings.*" Aix, J. David, 1783, four pages 8vo; the second was, "*Petition of the Count of Mirabeau,*" &c. Aix, J. David, 1783, 39 pages 4to. But Mirabeau's moderation was turned against himself.

"It is impossible for me not to grieve when I see that they have turned against me almost every action of mine that does me honour, and all my acts of moderation. My lawsuit especially, has not escaped the fatality of this misfortune. Have they not turned against me the entreaties which preceded the commencement of the suit? Have they not said, 'He is a husband, and he supplicates; therefore he is guilty?' My silence was attributed to a sense of my own unworthiness; my consent to every mediation to despair of my cause."—*Observations of the Count of Mirabeau upon a part of his Cause, &c.* page 39.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 6th 1783. Gassier was a skilful advocate, and a friend to both families.

to obey anybody but himself—but by deep and serious reflection. He therefore attempted, more on his own account than from any good-feeling towards his son, to prevent their publication. Even on the previous 10th of January *, he had written to his daughter-in-law a very witty and playful letter, which had produced a bad effect, and was openly blamed by the Bailli †. On the 12th of April ‡ following, he wrote to the

* Petition of the Count of Mirabeau, &c. Aix, J. David, 1783, p. 18.

† With due deference, although I am satisfied with all you have done, and thought, and written in this letter, I am not very glad that you have taken the matter in jest, in your reply to your daughter-in-law. There is no subject here for laughter, and it is dangerous to jest with the Marignanes."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 17th 1783.*

"All our friends think this tone of jesting with the daughter quite out of place. I saw her yesterday at her father's, he having returned my visit. She complained, and with just reason, that you had written to her in jest upon a subject that was no jesting matter. She added, that, at the bottom, you did not seem to take any very great interest in the business."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 19th 1783.*

Shortly after this, the Bailli, pursuing the very measure he had recommended to his brother, wrote a serious and dignified letter to the Countess of Mirabeau, who replied in a very improper manner Pp. 31 and 38 of "Petition of the Count of Mirabeau, &c."

‡ Ibid. p. 26.

§ Observations upon a Calumnious Libel, entitled "Case for Counsel's Opinion for the Countess of Mirabeau," &c. Aix, J. David, 1783, p. 18.

"As I have given you, or rather my son, full authority, so far as I am concerned, to take judicial steps, I have thought proper, on taking leave of peaceful measures, to write a serious, grave, and

father of the Countess * two letters, admirable for dignified and eloquent reasoning. Our only reason for not inserting these letters here, is to avoid failing in the engagement we have taken, not to use, except in cases of absolute necessity, any documents already published.

But there is another very remarkable letter on the same subject, written by the Marquis of Mirabeau to his brother, and this we feel called upon to transcribe, because it has never been published.

“Marignane has always been considered a man of known honour, and until I see it, I never can believe that he will act so basely as to publish letters written in confidential and domestic intimacy, on the occasion of my son’s misconduct. I had rather he were guilty of such a thing than I. It is, I think, not a very honourable mode of accounting for a repugnance to write †.

strong letter, and yet pacific, as regards her own interests. Enclosed is a copy, with which you will be satisfied.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau dated February 25th 1783.*

* “I wrote to the Marquis of Marignane a letter, which the President d’Entrecasteaux considers a master-piece. This is all my reply.” *Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated April 22nd 1783.*

† This “repugnance” is explained by the following passage in a letter, dated two years previously, June 5th 1781, from the Countess of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant :—

“I am often held back while I wish to write, especially to my father-in-law, because I know that *every thing remains*, and I always fear that something may escape from my pen that may be revived some day or other, and become a source of annoyance to us.”

Did he, on account of the measures he had taken, anticipate the consequences of writing? But what has this to do with the case? Why should he offer me such an insult, and make me my son's accuser, whilst the courts of justice would reject me, as not qualified by law to give an opinion for or against him?

“ How could he look for my evidence in letters written to the common father of our children? *Homo et humanitatis expers, et vitæ communis ignarus!* should I have a right to exclaim with a memorable juriconsult, *at etiam literas, &c.* * Could he invoke the rights of lawful defence? But this is of no consequence in the present case. Everybody knows that my son misconducted himself in earlier life, and that I took every possible precaution to stop the effects of his misconduct. To do this, I was necessarily obliged to concert measures with his father-in-law. I then spoke, according to the period, and to him, whom I considered as deeply interested in the matter as I was. Nobody ever doubted my grief under the affliction of these accumulated evils; but I flatter myself that people have also observed

The publication of the atrocious statement against Mirabeau, proved that he might also have said that in the Marignane family *every thing remained*; that there was more of calculation and prudence, than of negligence and good faith, in her repugnance to reply; and that the Marquis was right in considering it the “consequences of the measures taken” by this family.

* At the very time when the father was applying to his son's adversaries, this eloquent and often-quoted exclamation of the Roman orator, Mirabeau had taken it as his motto in his reply, entitled “Observations upon a Calumnious Libel, &c.

the precautions I took to observe public decency, and my repugnance basely to expose my domestic disgrace. Perhaps I yielded to confidential intercourse without due caution in my choice of expressions ; but the intercourse was with a man as interested as I was in not dishonouring the father of his grandson, who was then alive. Could I have foreseen that he would one day have the barbarity to convert into a handle against my son, the outpourings of a justly irritated father ?

" It is known at present that many of the charges against my son are without proof, and that others have been greatly exaggerated. Nothing now remains but offences against myself personally, and these I have sincerely and fully forgiven. I yielded to the entreaties of my children, and to the testimony of his repentance. I never thought that any authority should avenge, but only be just and protect ; and it was my opinion that no family breach should be final. In the persuasion that a father's pardon must necessarily secure a total restoration, I helped to efface the marks of my son's past imprudence ; and I sent him to you because you were always a second father to my children.

" Now, in the present business, my name ought not to appear in any form, and yet the security of the most confidential intercourse is violated in my person, in order to make me appear publicly as my son's accuser. When I believed him faulty, and declared him such to a man with whom I was bound to concert measures for his

correction, I endeavoured to withdraw him from society. to whom we are responsible for our actions and the exercise of our authority. When at a subsequent period, after having kept him with me for a time, I placed him in a situation to pursue a better course, it must have been inferred that I considered him in a condition to make amends for the past. The terms in which a man has expressed himself during a moment of past alarm, determines nothing with regard to the present; and no good can be derived from my letters, written formerly, when the question presented for solution is, whether or not he ought to be separated, by law, from his wife.

“ Though very inexperienced in the question of a husband claiming his wife, I have heard say that dissipation authorises a separation of property; but that ill-usage, alone, authorises a separation from bed and board. With reference to the first point, Madame de Mirabeau enjoys a separation of property, and no attempt is made to meddle with this arrangement. On the subject of ill-usage, much may have been invented, presumed, and reported against a young man displaying too much fire at all times; but my daughter-in-law has always exonerated him from every imputation on this score. She wrote this to me twice: in 1774, before she came to reside with me, and two years after her marriage. *Non ego litteras, et si jure poteram, &c.*

“To what can such animosity tend? And on what expectation will they be wanting in natural respect to me, to such a degree as to place me before the public in the light of my son’s accuser, and his implacable enemy, at the very time I am holding out a helping hand to him? From what I wrote during the time of his misconduct, do they expect to make people infer that he is a monster to whom a young wife is not to be entrusted? For the last six months, he has appeared among his fellow-citizens, each of whom may now compare him with what he was in his more youthful days, and thereby judge him. But we are not in a country of anthropophagi; and he does not want to take his wife to another land, or separate her from her relatives and friends. You were good enough to offer her a house, of which she should be the mistress, and you remain the master; and this, too, in a province where nobody ever called in question your justice and benevolence.

“I will admit that such considerations may have no weight with persons who have mistaken fear and repugnance for reasons; but judges who are at the feet of the law cannot step beyond its limits; and were they even such men as are elsewhere termed jurymen, they would not decide concerning a man’s whole future life, his natural and acquired rights, his posterity — concerning every thing, in short, belonging to him, according to impressions made, during his youthful errors, by the disclosure of confidential

domestic communications. And why, again, supposing such things legal, should we not be considered something in these last considerations? Has our name deserved erasure from the list of our fellow-countrymen? We have never done them evil, nor disgraced them; and if the house of Marignane has obtained so much influence, and so many adherents in the same country, it is also upon its extinction as well as upon ours, that the judges will have to decide,—if they yield to fleeting impressions. The first duty of a citizen is to give back to his country that which he received from it;—this remains. Minor repugnances, irritating disappointments, mutual charity, and other ingredients employed by the passions of the day in compounding the transient agitations of life, are nothing but wind and smoke compared with the higher considerations, and lasting effects which result from the fulfilment of our first duty.

“ It does not become me, being at so great a distance, to speak of the cause itself; I have only to complain of the offence of charging me before the public, and of the abuse of my confidence. Let the base act of those I have, at all times, kindly and affectionately treated, together with the reward I have received from them, remain. If it deprives them for ever of the confidence of all men of honour—if people do not show them the respect which they consider themselves justified in refusing to an afflicted and irreproachable old man, who

never injured them, but, on the contrary, always stood forward to guard them against any thing that could trouble their domestic peace, let them not accuse external objects, but the order of nature which requires that mankind should reap, always, or nearly so, that which they have sown. I have erred by misplaced confidence, and I am severely punished for my error ; but there would be some difficulty in bringing home to me the charge of having betrayed any body's confidence, or of having wilfully done, or wished to do unto others, that which I would not they should do unto me.

"I have been writing to you as of a positive fact, whilst I cannot yet believe in its existence. If however the thing is to take place, my counsel, whose written opinions I will send you in due form, think I can obtain redress at law, and oppose the printing and publication, if there is time, or else claim back the original letters, and have the statements and extracts suppressed. If this is also the opinion of your counsel, I hereby authorise you to take the necessary steps in my name. Not but that my pacific intentions are the same as before—not but that any act of hostility would be exceedingly painful to me ; but I perceive, though very late, that such a disposition of the heart is not the one that proceeds the most rapidly to the end sought ; quite the reverse ; and that it ultimately leads us to neglect ourselves as well as to make others forget what we owe to ourselves, and how much of deference, respect, and equitable reciprocity is our due.

“Farewell ! May God reward you for your exertions, expense, and trouble, which your family can never repay *.”

All was, however, useless: the fatal statement appeared †. The following is an account by Mirabeau of the circumstances which preceded its circulation.

“Pausanias relates that at thirty stadia from the city of Sparta was to be seen a statue of Chastity, raised by Icarius on the following occasion :

“Icarius having bestowed the hand of his daughter upon Ulysses tried, but ineffectually, to persuade his son-in-law to remain and settle at Sparta. Frustrated in his hope, he tried what he could do with his daughter, whom he intreated not to leave him ; and when she set out with her husband for Ithaca, he followed her car, beseeching her to return. Ulysses, weary of such importunity, told her to choose between her father and her husband, leaving it to her own free choice either to proceed with him to Ithaca or to return to Sparta with her father. The fair Penelope drew her veil over her face which was suffused with blushes. Icarius understood this mute reply, and allowed his daughter to depart with her husband ; but being much struck with the confusion in which he had seen her, he dedicated a statue to Chastity, placing it on the very spot

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated April 6th 1783.

† It was entitled, “ Case and Counsel’s Opinion for the Countess of Mirabeau.” Aix, J. B. Mourel, 1783 ; 162 pages quarto.

where Penelope had covered her face with a veil, which, from that period, every woman was directed to wear.

"The above is a specimen of beautiful antiquity; the following is modern.

"Just as Madame de Mirabeau was about to *communicate* the diabolical statement which she has published, she sent a copy of it to the Bailli of Mirabeau, by the Marquis of Castellane-Mazaugue. A very few minutes after she sent for it back, and repeated the message several times, before the Bailli could possibly have read it. Gassier, who felt how critical this moment was, saw the parties frequently during the day. For the third time, he proposed an arbitration by four noblemen. Messrs. de Mirabeau consented. Madame de Mirabeau wept, and did not seem disposed to reject the offer of the ambassador, when her attorney, who is also that of the De Grasse family, came in and informed her that all would be lost if the statement were not *communicated* immediately; (this statement was the pledge of a war of extermination;) that her counsel would desert her cause because they were *certain* that an answer to this statement was already printed, and would appear first, if the communication was delayed an instant, the only object of the offer of arbitration, being to gain time.

"Three times the attorney had come to the door of the room, and Madame de Crose * had refused him

* The Marquis of Marignane's particular friend.

admittance. This lady had guessed the object of his mission, and was anxious, at any price, to put an end to the lawsuit which made M. de Marignane very unhappy, and was far from doing him honour. But the fourth time Madame de Grasse of Bar, M. de Marignane's sister, opened the fatal door, and the angel of peace was put to flight by the man in black. All had been prepared, and the firebrand of an attorney had no sooner obtained leave to *communicate*, than a copy of the statement was served on the Mirabeau family *."

Let us see what the Bailli says upon the subject.

"The statement has appeared at last, and it is of a nature which I am persuaded, calls for your interference. You are bound in honour to complain of this breach of confidence, for your letters are published, and form the greater portion of this production which contains a hundred and sixty pages.

"You know, my dear brother, that I never hazard assertions. But I now assure you, from facts and articles, and written characters which I well know, that your son is justified in having stated, in his

* Extract from Mirabeau's unpublished account already mentioned, entitled "Letters from a former Magistrate," &c.

"Madame de Mirabeau spent the whole of that day in tears; three times she asked for peace; and the fatal statement published in her name was obtained from her, by a trick played off upon her by an attorney in the interest of the covetous collaterals, whom the public have designated as the authors of the lawsuit."—*Case of the Count of Mirabeau, suppressed at the moment of its publication, &c.*

pleading, that every body has, perhaps, reason to complain of him with the sole exception of her to whom his conduct has always been the most generous. I should not, upon his sole authority, believe what I have stated ; but I have unquestionable evidence, verbal, from individuals worthy of credit, and written, which admits not of doubt.

“ This infamous statement is a decidedly calumnious libel, scarcely at all touching upon the question at issue, but the object of which is to accuse your son of all sorts of crimes ; the whole founded upon letters written by you to Marignane, and to that unworthy woman, who compares them to her own letters, which we have transcribed, and which do her a thousand times more honour than she deserves,—whilst those written by you are full of error and exaggeration, and prove that you were deceived not only by the hypocrites about you, but by those very individuals who now make use of what they then made you write. We are now going to examine whether a man cannot be prosecuted for having basely betrayed the confidence of an irritated father, who confidentially states his grievances to individuals who have the same interests as himself, and is not, consequently, very nice in his expressions. I cannot, neither would I if I could, prevent your son at present from carrying matters to extremities.

“ You were wrong, I think, in not letting me know, from the very beginning, that you had written such

letters. We might then have taken measures to have prevented their being made use of. But the evil is committed, and there is one passage which I think will lead to the shedding of blood ; for in it you assert that your son will not seek *for battles*, because there are none, and *because he does not like battles*. I know not how far this is true ; but it may turn out that you are mistaken, and the publication of this passage may induce him to prove the contrary *.”

The Marquis soon after wrote—

“ I well know that he who does not succeed is always in the wrong, and this is the first sentence in La Chatre’s memoirs ; but they who know that this woman has always been so surrounded, that it was impossible to speak to her without witnesses, and that her husband has never been able to obtain a conference with her, and they who have witnessed the insolence of her family, well know that all the blame attaches to them. Had the woman granted conferences, and declared that she would not live with her husband again, I would have prevented him, and I should have found no difficulty in doing so, from persevering to obtain her by law ; which, even in case of success, would lead to nothing, for we would not take her now.

- “ I advise him to say that this is his last defence ; that he has no desire to force any body’s affections ; and that

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 6th 1783.

whatever the judgment may be, he declares that his wife shall herself fix her situation *."

The libellous statement against Mirabeau being once published, all hope of conciliation was at an end.

"The fatal publication has appeared, and has disgusted every person of respectability, even those who were friends of the Marignauxes. It is an abominable compound of lies and calumnies, all foreign to the cause, but uttered merely to defame, and render a reconciliation impossible. Your letters constituted the greater portion of this production; the commentary was vomited forth from hell†. There must be no further reply except in contradiction of these infamous assertions, and not to claim a woman who, if you believe me, ought never again to enter our mother's house. Let us mention her no more ‡!"

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated April 22nd 1783.

† And yet it is from this statement as much as and even more than from the Vincennes correspondence, that the materials of Mirabeau's private life have been taken by all his biographers.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 11th 1783. We find in a letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau, the effect produced upon him by the disclosure of his most confidential communications, a proceeding so base that at first he would not believe it possible, notwithstanding the notice and threats of which we have given an account in the text.

"The very thought of this atrocious publication made me turn pale for the first time in my life. Although hardened and covered with scars, I found myself for a moment too unhappy, for I do not tell you of all the agony I endured, especially that sort of discour-

What have we further to say? What useful detail could we add to this energetic and just estimate of one of the most atrocious libels ever dictated by hatred? Mirabeau, however, still kept his temper. In a short time he published a reply * comparatively moderate, and rich in eloquence. He pointed out what was unnecessarily odious in the publication of his father's letters†

agement which questions Providence and says to it, 'August Protector of the cedar and the shrub, what wilt thou do with me?'"—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated June 9th 1783.*

However base the calumnies contained in this statement, it seems that the parties subsequently found means to go even beyond them.

"They have given it greater development in their pleadings, and ill-usage forms one of their most affecting episodes. Listen to what they have dared to plead; I do not change a single word, but transcribe it from notes taken at the hearing, and certified by the advocate who assisted me," &c.—*Case of the Countess of Mirabeau, suppressed at the moment of its publication, &c.* p. 168.

* Observations upon a calumnious libel entitled, "Case and Counsel's Opinion for the Countess of Mirabeau." Aix, J. D'— 1783; 202 pages 4to; followed by Counsel's opinion forming pages; Aix, A. Adibert, 1783.

† To form an idea of the unparalleled vindictiveness of Mirabeau's adversaries and of their unreasonableness, bad faith, and the little trouble they took to colour their insults, the reader should examine the mode in which they attempted to justify their publication of letters, placing a father in the light of his son's calumniator.

"What!" said they, "does it become those who FIRST SET THE EXAMPLE OF COMMUNICATING LETTERS, WITHOUT NECESSITY to appeal to the principles of delicacy and honour?"—*Case and Counsel's Opinion for the Countess of Mirabeau.*

The absurdity of such a defence, and the fallacy of such an argu-

of which he proved, with as much skill as power, the exaggerations and errors. He discussed and refuted,

ment are self-evident; for the letters published by Mirabeau did honour to his wife, whilst those which she published threw disgrace upon him. He accordingly exclaimed :

“ You drive an unhappy woman to war without giving her a single specious reason for doing so ! You force her to sanction an infamous proceeding, which you cannot even attempt to defend without your principles falling upon your own heads and crushing you. I have communicated, you say, my wife’s letters without necessity ! without necessity ! * * * * Why then did you accuse me, in her name, of having destroyed in her bosom, all conjugal affection ? Was it unjust that I should show the existence of conjugal affection on her part at the period we quitted each other ? You pretended that it was impossible my wife could bear my presence ; to which I replied by showing the regret she had expressed at our separation. You insisted upon it that I had ill used her, and I showed by her own testimony, that I had always acted with justice and tenderness towards her. Was it thus that I broke the seal of domestic secrets ? Ought my wife’s attachment to me to constitute a secret—a mystery ? Was I to let people believe that I had not deserved it—that it had been taken from me ? What have I said that could make her blush ? * * * Ah ! if she pretends that she has reason to complain, let her look around her—let her accuse those who suppose she has the art of feigning to such a degree that she can describe with the appearance of truth that pleased the public so much, feelings which she does not possess ! Let her accuse those who maintain that her heart belied her tongue and her pen—that she loved me not, but looked upon me with dread at the very moment she said, ‘ I adore thee ! ’ Let her look with horror upon those who have induced her to sign such strange assertions ! They alone have calumniated and defamed her, by imputing to her the basest duplicity—by accusing her of having degraded herself so far as even to trace in her letters the oath of eternal love, to the unworthy husband whom she had the strongest reason to hate. * * * * In sum, what-

one by one, the calumnious charges wantonly brought against him. He maintained, and with truth, that before imprisonment and exile had separated him from his wife, whom he has not since beheld, she never had occasion to charge him with a single direct and serious wrong. He proved, by facts and by text, that in neither law nor equity, was she entitled to a separation, which the courts of justice granted only in cases of real and substantiated ill usage. As for the prosecution at Pontarlier, the legal consequences of which he ably disposed of on the ground of his having voluntarily given himself up, whereby the judgment had been set aside and its very object done away by compromise, and by the death of the complainant,—Mirabeau, in extenuation of its moral consequences, pleaded his extreme youth, and the abandonment in which his wife's obstinacy had left him; drawing a striking, though measured comparison between his own sufferings, and the notorious life of pleasure and dissipation led by his wife for eight years past; she having instituted this suit merely to continue the enjoyments of such life.

ever may happen, I published Madame de Mirabeau's letters which belonged to me, even exclusively, because they were written to me. These letters, which contain means of defence, and not of attack, (and what defence?) these letters which do honour to her who formed them, instead of defaming her—these letters which only prove feelings of which a wife ought to be proud:—these letters are decisive in the suit, which they could and ought to have prevented.”—*Observations upon a Calumnious Libel, &c.* pp. 35, 36, and 37.

Lastly, calling to mind the supplicating * manner in which he had urged his claims, and the praises he had

* What have I done?—what have I said since the existence of this fatal lawsuit, for which they have not reason to thank me? I have begged, I have entreated, I have waited patiently; I have received insults with calmness, and redressed them with moderation; I have praised my father-in-law, and have extolled my wife. * * * *
 * * * I have claimed her, it is true!—but was I not bound to do so before God and man? Did I claim her with rudeness, with hauteur, or with precipitation? Whither ought I to have gone to show my regeneration, if not to my native country? To what witnesses did I owe the first satisfaction, if not to my countrymen? What land has a greater claim to the homage of my repentance, to the atonement of my errors and the wrongs I have committed, than that which was the cradle of my forefathers, where, besides, so many matters require my presence, and where my presence constituted the necessary pledge to my too numerous creditors? How was it possible for me to come hither, and remain so near my wife, without offering to her the tribute of my first feelings? Have I done any thing else?"

"Far from making any attempt upon her freedom, I asked only to see her. This was refused me, and the refusal accompanied with insult. All my demands were rejected, and I was declared, without return and *for ever*, cast off by my adopted family and my wife was *for ever* taken from me. And these people boast of their moderation!—and they complain of being *forced* to speak! *Forced*, are they?— And who are *forced*, then, to refuse all conference, all measures of conciliation?—to heap insult upon insult?—to publish, *as a first production*, a string of horrible calumnies?—to stab me with the hand of an angry father?"—*Observations upon a Calumnious Libel, &c.*

A remarkable fact is, that the plan and tone of this justification was suggested by the Marquis of Mirabeau himself, who did not the less persist in his habit of blaming every thing done by his son—

"I think, for my part, that if the Count took care to soften matters, instead of making them worse—to receive insults with calmness, redress them with moderation; ask in what place he shall

bestowed upon his father-in-law, and his wife, he pointed out the contrast between his own conduct ~~and~~ their hasty rejection of him and the baseness of ~~the~~ insults.

After the publication of this statement, Mirabeau appeared before the Grand Chamber *, and pleaded

display a sincere regeneration, if it be not in his native country; to what witnesses he owes his first satisfaction, if it be not to his countrymen; and what country has a greater right to his services than the cradle of his forefathers; and how it was possible he could be so near his wife without paying her the homage of the return of his first feelings; whether he has done any thing else; and far from making an attempt upon her liberty, he only demands that of seeing her:—I think they will find great difficulty in obtaining a separation.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 23rd 1783.*

* The grand chamber is loudly against us, and it is impossible to see a stronger example of the effect produced in a small town by keeping open-house, and enjoying great influence. *Letter from the Bailli above quoted, dated April 11th.*

“What would you have? The Marignanes have everybody on their side, and we are here without relatives, as your mother is not now in this part of the country, my mother's family, or, at least, the branch to which she belonged, is extinct. My grandmother, Elizabeth of Rochemore, was from Languedoc; my great-grandmother, Anne of Pontevès, was the last of an extinct race; my great-great-grandmother, Margaret of Glandevès was the same. Thus we are isolated; your father was never in this part of the country, where there is a provincial administration, and the local nobles fill the offices of Procureur du Roi, Joint Procurator, Syndic of the Nobility, &c. Our adversaries have held these appointments, and hold them still; this gives them a great power, which we do not possess, and which operates against us.”—*Unpublished Letter from the Bailli to Madame du Saillant, dated June 23rd 1783.*

there in person, on the 23rd of May *, and the 17th † and 19th of June, with a power rarely offensive. Being, however, irritated at last by the calumnies before published, and verbally repeated in Court, he quoted in reply to the accusations of having ill-used his wife, a letter, dated May 28th 1774, which proved a grievous fault on the part of his wife, and a generous pardon on his. Being purposely provoked by a formal denial of this fact, and defied to prove the existence of such a letter, he produced, read, and commented upon it. His adversaries in their turn, read and commented upon it, but without denying its authenticity, or dreaming, notwithstanding what has been asserted ‡, of presenting it as

* This pleading of the 23rd of May was published by extracts, in a "Reply to the Pleading of Madame de Mirabeau, of the 13th of June," Aix, A. Adibert, 1783. Mirabeau afterwards published "Observations by the Count of Mirabeau upon a part of his cause," Aix, A. Adibert, 1783, 43 pages, 4to; and "A Summary for the Count of Mirabeau," Aix, A. Adibert, 1783, 13 pages, 4to.

† Between a pleading in the name of his wife, pronounced the 13th of June, and the reply of the husband on the 17th, fresh attempts were made at accommodation. Acceptable conditions were not offered to Mirabeau until just before he went into court, in order that it might "enervate his eloquence." This he promised it should do; but the proposals being withdrawn the very next day, he did not discover the snare until he had fallen into it.

‡ See "Biographie Universelle," vol. xxxv. p. 450, first column. Others have written, and among them Cadet Gassicourt (p. 7 of the first edition, and p. 5 of the second), that, in 1774, Mirabeau forced his wife to write him this letter, BY THREATENING HER LIFE WITH A PISTOL. We declare that there is not the least ground for this falsehood too readily believed and repeated, but there is

matter of public defamation ; a point which was seized, taken up, and brought forward, *ex officio*, by the public

evidence to the contrary in a passage which we transcribe the more readily, because it is favourable to the celebrated Portalis who was Madame de Mirabeau's counsel.

“ If *force* compelled you to accuse yourself by a written confession of an imaginary fault, I am the most abominable of men and you the most unfortunate of victims. But think you that your single assertion will suffice?—especially as in your romance of ill-usage, you had quite forgotten this horrible instance of it!—especially as you have lived free during ten years, and already spent four months in prosecuting the present suit, without having ever complained of this atrocious act ! What base and criminal coldness can have benumbed you with regard to the care of your honour ! What a cowardly and ferocious tyrant must I be ! What a monstrous assemblage of treachery, holdness, and wickedness, must fill my soul ! Why did you not expose it entirely ? You had already said too much not to fear everything—not to destroy me outright ! Alas ! in what a defile have you placed yourself ? By what engagements are men to be bound in future if the articulation of the word *force* possessed the virtue of dissolving them ! With this word, there is no bad action that could not be excused ; and such would be the prestige of this word that there would no longer be any morality in human actions. . . . Oh ! you depended upon other resources, but they have failed. It is notorious that you have conspired to find supporters of your denial : do not force me to trace the history of your plots and of your accomplices.

“ A thousand and one stories have been circulated by Madame de Mirabeau and her adherents, concerning the manner in which the letter was written. Why then did she appear in Court without even one of the marvellous supporters she had obtained ? Why did she not utter a single one of these tales ? Did the fatal portfolio, which I opened before her, act as a Medusa's head to her ? No, gentlemen ; you may thank the talents and probity of her Counsel, for not having heard, in all its horrible details, the most atrocious and most calumnious of romances. He found it too absurd and too immoral ;

prosecutor himself *, whose incredible partiality made him seize with avidity upon the pretence of an actual and flagrant instance of ill-usage, in order to present at least one grievance in this suit for a separation, in which a thousand were alleged without the least proof, and without their being able to stand for an instant against the overwhelming refutations of the accused

he would not disgrace himself nor his profession by uttering it. I owe him the justice to state that, since the day when I accused him before you of having planned this lamentable suit, he has endeavoured to bring it to a close with a zeal that clearly shows how cruelly he had been deceived. This is the most noble revenge he could have taken for the charge I brought against him. This declaration, and this homage to truth are due to him." *Reply to the Pleading of Madame de Mirabeau*, pp. 36, 37, and 38.

Such was Mirabeau, and such was Portalis ; but what can we say of a writer thoughtless enough to repeat, after a lapse of so many years, an infamous falsehood, so victoriously refuted in public documents, which he could have consulted as we have done.

At a later period, Mirabeau, in his "Case for the Count of Mirabeau suppressed at the moment of its publication," &c., pp. 120 and following, again alludes, with still greater energy, to the abominable falsehood of his having obtained this letter from his wife by violence.

* "Madame de Mirabeau's advocate did not dare to present this new fact as a ground of separation, nor propose it by petition, as prescribed by the ordinance of 1667, title II, art. 26. He felt that, after the horrible libel of the 6th of April, it was not for him to discuss how far the defences of the husband and wife, parties to this suit for a separation, ought to be moderated. Thus, this new ground for separation WAS FORMALLY PROPOSED AS SUCH BY THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR ALONE, who neither had, nor could have a right to add to Madame de Mirabeau's complaint." *Case of the Count of Mirabeau, suppressed at the moment of its publication*, &c., p. 26.

party. Thus assisted, Mirabeau's opponents abandoned every point urged until now, and confined themselves to this one alone. In vain did Mirabeau show that the letter contained not the slightest evidence of such a crime; that in its production there was nothing defamatory *, but that it had been produced in the

* See "Observations by the Count of Mirabeau upon a part of his Cause," pp. 26, 27, 28. See also "*Case of the Count of Mirabeau, suppressed*," &c., pp. 63 to 71.

Prior to this incident which supplied a ground of separation, obtained during the arguments in Court, it was pretended that Madame de Mirabeau had been defamed by the petitions which her husband had filed in 1776, when he applied by letter to the Minister, M. de Malesherbes, as we have already stated. This accusation was easily set aside, for the Marquis himself had refuted it in one of his letters.

"With regard to the defamation, they adduce a libel to which they have given the name of Case, and I well know the history of this pretended Case. The young man was pleading his very bad cause before the minister; this led to very bad reasons, and these to a very bad form. But he was writing to the minister; and precisely on account of what I have just stated, he had no interest in publishing his defence. He only sent a copy of his letter to very bad hands (those of the Marchioness of Mirabeau who defended him). The whole, a long time after, was dished up in the form of a Case, by means of an opinion attached to it by a beggarly advocate named Groubert de Groubental. Such, at least, is what I was told at a period when no one attempted to justify him. Now, if it were true that he wrote everything contained in this Case—to accuse in secret speech or correspondence is not defaming, for defamation is disclosure and publicity. And, besides, on this head the Case is totally free from any such thing."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated April 3rd 1783*. Mirabeau writes in the same sense. See *Original Letters from Vincennes*, vol. iii, p. 354.

lawful interest of his defence. A decree of separation was the consequence; it was rendered on the 5th of July*.

Let us now look for some particulars in the Marquis's letters.

"The question is about to be tried. My brother informs me that his nephew defends himself like a devil, and knows more Latin than the bench and the bar put together—a thing I can readily believe. It is a fact that he has so twisted them all about, that most of the public are now on his side. This is the general version here; it is likewise what is stated in letters from the spot, and likewise from Grenoble and Avignon. What is still more strange, I receive the same information from Italy; but you will be less surprised at this when I tell you that the Archduke of Milan is at Aix†, with his consort, and has chosen

* This decree is published in the "Case of the Count of Mirabeau suppressed," &c., p. 72.

† This Archduke and Archduchess travelled *incogniti* under the names of the Count and Countess of Nellenburgh. On this occasion, the Marquis of Mirabeau wrote in another letter:—

"Thirty years ago, I had another brother at Avignon (Alexander Louis) likewise a man of energy, and who made me first try my hand in the good calling I have since pursued. He was at his wit's end, having received his portion as a younger son, and made but three mouthfuls of it. But lo and behold! it rained a Margrave, brother-in-law of the King of Prussia, and his wife, a very enlightened princess. They were going to Italy. Having taken a fancy to my brother, they obtained, from his generosity, his consent to accompany them. He went to Germany to reign, and we thus got rid of

to hear the pleadings. What glory for the grandson of our father * !”

We find in the same letters mention of a circumstance hitherto known by tradition only ; and the truth of which was even doubted when Portalis, Madame de Mirabeau’s counsel, had reached a high political station.

“ Your brother’s adverse parties are madder than he is, which is saying all. They are overrunning this country with intrigues, clamours, and atrocious publications, which are to be reprinted in order to give them greater circulation. Besides having retained all the advocates to deprive your brother of legal assistance, they engaged one celebrated for rage and impetuosity † ;” but your devil of a brother uttered a terrible speech, because he found himself opposed to another furious

his person. If the Archduke and Archduchess of Milan, would carry off the specimen now at Aix, they should have him cheap. But I do not think the Italians are so easily taken in with grand airs as the Germans.” *Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated July 18th 1783.*

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated July 13th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated April 28th 1783. The Marquis had already had occasion to complain of him ; for, in pleading for Madame de Cabris, who, in 1778, brought an action before the Parliament of Aix for the recovery of her freedom, and the guardianship of her insane husband and her daughter under age, Portalis, then very young, indulged in such fits of fury against the Marquis, that he was reprimanded.

fellow, who had been chosen on purpose, but whom he crushed all to pieces*. His adverse advocate, who was borne fainting out of the court, has not quitted his bed ever since the terrible dressing of five hours†, which your brother gave him. You may well suppose that the gentleman who always applies his vanity to the very inside-out of good sense and a good heart, is mighty proud of this feat‡."

The Marquis gives still further particulars.

"Imagine the triumph of this mountebank. On the day of the great puppet-show, in spite of the guard, which was tripled, the doors, and barriers, and windows were all invaded and forced open by the wonder-stricken crowd. Some even got upon the roofs of the houses to see if they could not hear him. It is a great pity that they did not all hear him, for he spoke, and howled, and roared so much, that his lion's mane was white with foam and steeped in perspiration ||."

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau, to Madame de Saillant, dated June 5th 1783.

† My poor brother writes to me that his nephew spoke and pleaded like a Cicero, from a quarter past eight till one o'clock, without spitting or blowing his nose. But I tell you that this posthumous Cicero is nothing more than an incorrigible chatterer and a fool."—

Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis of Longo, dated June 9th 1783.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame de Saillant, dated June 22nd, 1783.

|| Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated July 15th 1783

The Bailli also wrote on the subject.

“ I had not courage enough to state to you the unfortunate issue of your brother’s lawsuit. I know that the parties who lose always pretend that their case has been badly judged ; and I should think myself one of the class of murmurers, had I not, in support of my opinion, not only that of all the town—for public clamour forced my adversaries to withdraw from the field, with shame and quite alone *—but also that of all the magistrates of any reputation, whilst those whose votes made me lose, stand very light in the public estimation, and some even worse, as it is said. Your father, without intending it, did us a great deal of harm ; and the woman you know of, persuaded him that, at a distance of two hundred leagues, and without knowing the individuals, he could see better what he had to do, than who had been studying the man and thing for the last five years. This decree has disgusted the whole province ; it will not be believed, but it is a fact †.”

* “ It is now known that the decree would have been quite favourable, if public opinion had been consulted. It is known with what testimonies of kindness and benevolence, during the progress of the suit, the defeated party was honoured, which put the successful parties to flight. It is known with what transports the sentences favourable to my cause, rendered by the first judges, were received, and how my pleadings were listened to.”—*Case of the Count de Mirabeau, suppressed, &c.*

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli of Mirabeau to Madame de Saillant, dated August 30th 1783.

This appears to us very high authority ; but we must add that the

The Bailli, whilst he wrote in these terms to his niece, did not conceal his opinion from his brother.

"It was Paris that ruined us here; for a correspondence has always existed between a certain person whom you do not know well enough, but whom I well know, and this woman. You may not believe me, but it is certain that they have been well informed here of your repugnance to appear in the suit. They considered themselves sure that you would prevent us from going to law; hence all they have said, and their insults, and their gladiator boastings.

"You are the elder, and you cannot believe that your younger brother knows any thing: you fancy him pre-occupied and imposed upon; but it is not less certain that we have been ruined by this praiseworthy and useful letter-writing *."

Without admitting or even alluding to the cause mentioned by his brother, the Marquis this time did not refuse to yield to evidence.

"In fact the judges are greatly embarrassed. As

most complete public notoriety had preceded it, and that the contrary was never asserted except by writers who wanted to calumniate Mirabeau. We are surprised to find in the ranks of such writers, M. Ch. Lacretelle, who having again degraded history by inserting in its pages insignificant and false anecdotes borrowed from obscure pamphlets, says that "Mirabeau sank under his evil reputation." *History of France during the eighteenth century*. Paris, 1821, vol. vii. p. 19.

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau,

no *act of that alleged defamation* was taken instant, there is not, in what remains, sufficient of separation, and the less so because they ad during the last six months his conduct has been under their eyes. On the other hand, the could not summon courage to give Marignane band, such a slap in the face. The servants l that all this will end in a few years' residence i vent, before judgment is pronounced ; that tl scratch each other at the first visit, enter into e tions during the second, and beget a child at th I might have patched up the matter, as I see tl do each other a mutual justice by calling ea rogue and whore. This is certainly making gress *."

We find in the same letter from the Marquis particulars concerning what occurred when the was pronounced in open court.

"Your brother has lost his cause, that is to court have declared that matters shall remain *quo* ; that is to say, that the wife shall remain her father, and the husband and wife shall be se bodily and in property, until further orders. T form is used, because it is said that man cannot the bonds which God has formed. But at bottom question turned upon the convent, since, in his

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to du Saillant, dated July 15th 1783.

declared that he would have none. The debate lasted four hours, between eight judges, the others taking no share in it, and refusing to vote. Among the four who were favourable to him*, some proposed two years' residence in a convent, the others, until she was thirty-five years of age. The first president proposed that they should decide provisionally, and refer the case to the first judge, the reference being registered; but the others refused every thing. He then told them that they should sit twenty-four hours in debate. At length the Marignane party succeeded in detaching one of the younger judges from the other side†. The first president refused to insert, as is usually done, that the opinions were unanimous, saying, that he wished his to be publicly known. The advocate-general was hissed. Your brother had gained the whole country to his side, the people, and the good judges. It is surprising how that hang-dog wins the regard of every body. I perceive this in other people's letters, for mine give no particulars on the subject‡."

Although well acquainted with every circumstance

* M. de la Tour, the first President, and Messrs. Dénoyer, de St. Jean, and du Peyrier.—*Case of the Count of Mirabeau, suppressed, &c.*, p. 141.

† The President de Jouques, "who went over to Madame de Mirabeau's side, 'not to give,' as he then said, 'in so solemn a cause, the scandal of a division.'"—*Ibid.* p. 142.

‡ Unpublished letter, already quoted, from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated July 15th 1783.

of the case, the Marquis would not hear of an application to annul the decree*.

"I informed you of your brother's case. It is asserted that his wife and father-in-law, driven away by the public outcry, are coming to Paris. At the same time the other wishes to come hither and get the decree annulled; but I will not allow it. Such a proceeding, which I would willingly have seen patched up in Provence, even after the publicity, is not worthy of me, and I shall not change my mind in this matter†."

The Bailli also confirms this.

"Your father opposes the appeal. He will not understand that the question is not about a wife, but about our honour, which is engaged in the business. I expect soon to send him back your brother, who will surely make him alter his determination. This brother of yours has become the idol of the whole country. He prudently puts up with some insolence, which your father's letters had encouraged certain individuals to commit. He also showed in the clearest, shortest, and most precise manner, when the proper time came, that it was dangerous to be insolent to him‡."

* The Bailli had, however, written to him:—

"The most respected of the judges are the first to urge us to get the decree set aside."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Madame du Saillant, dated August 30th 1783.*

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated August 2nd 1783.

‡ Letter before quoted, from the Bailli to Madame du Saillant, dated August 30th 1783.

Mirabeau, in fact, had contained himself much longer than could have been expected from his natural impetuosity and tried valour. Some time previously, the Bailli had written—

“ I am well satisfied with your brother ; his wife was right in saying that he had strength of mind on great occasions. People here are playing him all the ugly tricks that they can think of. He is made to suffer the strangest and most disgraceful conduct. He has, however, contained, and still contains himself ; and he sets me the example : for I confess that, at his age, if the same offences had been committed towards me, I should most probably have ruined myself*.”

The Bailli, even prior to this, had given an instance of his nephew's moderation.

“ There is a man here † whose name you may guess. His father has commanded him not to interfere ; but not only does he interfere, but is even the reputed mover of the whole business. Your son behaves here with great courtesy ; and even the day before yesterday, he saved this man from a difficulty into which his impertinence had brought him. There is in this town

* Letter before quoted, from the Bailli to Madame du Saillant, dated June 23rd 1783.

† Galiffet, a provincial hero, who has 500,000 francs a year, and who declares himself. All this, from hence, appears to me the most insipid jumble in the world.—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated January 23rd 1783.*

a young English nobleman *, who is acquainted with, and very much attached to your son. This Englishman was walking on the *Cours* with three of the first ladies in the province. The captain passed, and looked at them with an air of contempt, and did not bow, although he is acquainted with these ladies, but is angry with them because they are on your son's side. The Englishman was about to charge him, when your son stopped him, saying, 'I am, for the present, the captain of that man's guard †.' ”

On the very day the decree was rendered, Mirabeau sent a message to M. de Galiffet, whose well-known partiality in the business was attributed by the public to a particular cause affecting Mirabeau's honour as a husband.

“ The same day there was an explosion with Galiffet, another puff-ball. But the Bailli is very proud of the business, and it is rather dangerous to contradict him. Be that as it may, I have seen all the particulars in letters received by other people, and Galiffet is terribly laughed at ‡.”

He had been wounded.

“ I wrote to you that there had been a duel between him and Galiffet. They appointed another meet-

* Lord Peterborough.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 6th 1783.

‡ Unpublished letter, before quoted, from the same to the same, dated July 17th 1783.

ing at Vaucluse: he went, but the other was prevented *."

An officer in the Marechaussee, whom Mirabeau did not expect to see, persuaded him not to wait any longer. A second meeting was appointed, with no better success, at Lisle (five leagues from Avignon), and there Mirabeau remained a whole week without seeing his adversary†.

He did not, however, give up the point. After his return to Aix, he had for some days past been watching the motions of his adversary, who had willingly obeyed the public authorities in their prohibition of a second duel. One day, the servant, whom he had sent out for information, having assured himself of the direction which M. de Galiffet had taken, ran hastily to seek his master, whom he met carrying a great number of books in his pockets and under his arms. Mirabeau, without giving himself time to get rid of his load, contented himself with freeing his right arm, and drawing his sword, ran to meet M. de Galiffet. His own chasseur and the servant of his adversary drew back on each side to keep off any persons who might approach, placing themselves at each end of the street, which was short and narrow. The combat was warm,

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated August 2nd 1783.

† Mirabeau employed a portion of the time he was waiting for his opponent, in writing an effusion in poetical prose, upon the fountain of Vaucluse. We possess it in his own hand-writing.

but did not last long; the Count of Galiffet was run through the arm. Next day, both he and Mirabeau were placed under arrest, at their own houses, by the Grand Provost. Some time after, satisfactory explanations were given, and a reconciliation was brought about, through the kind offices of M. de la Tour, first president, and intendant of the province *.

* In relating this fact, we have no intention of granting the honour of a contradiction to old and contemptible reports, which, notwithstanding the proofs of Mirabeau's valour given in Corsica, accuse him of a want of personal courage. As we are writing his life, we merely wished to record a fact within our own knowledge. But here is another fact, which, a few days after Mirabeau's death, was published in the *Mercure Universel*.

Letter to the authors of the *Mercure Universel*.

April 11th 1791.

Nothing is to be neglected relative to the great man, of whom death has just deprived France; and I should consider myself a bad citizen, did I not, on this occasion, give a formal contradiction to those of Mirabeau's detractors, who wish to make him pass for a coward.

" Pending his lawsuit with his wife, being grossly insulted by three *ci-devant* nobles, he challenged them upon the spot, and, the same day, fought them all three. Although I was present at these three duels, I have no language to express the manner in which he bore himself towards one of them, the last of the three champions whom he had forced into the field. All that I can say is—and several well-known inhabitants of Aix, where these duels took place, will attest the same thing—that I never saw even any of our duellists by profession bear themselves towards adversaries with more firmness and gallantry. This fact, which I attest upon my honour, seems to me unanswerable, and it adds the more to M. de Mirabeau's glory, because, during the course of his troublesome labours, he evinced sufficient greatness of soul not to expose his life to the sword of a bully, but

The Bailli was completely discouraged by the loss of the cause.

“ Nothing of mine ever succeeded,” he wrote, “ whatever zeal, perseverance, care, or devotedness I may have applied to it. I never thought of myself, only of my family. I bestowed the hand of one of my nieces * in marriage very happily, to all appearance, and you see what it has come to. I took the first steps with regard to my nephew’s marriage, and behold the result ! I have devoted myself to my family, which is the cause of my not commanding our naval forces. The sole fact of my seniority would have led me to the command : and I have been more at sea, and in more actions, and have received more wounds than Guichen, D’Orvilliers, and Grasse, who were only midshipmen when I was a lieutenant. As for the generalship of the galleys, it has done me as much harm as good.

* * * * *

“ At length, the admission is wrung from me that Melchisedec was very lucky ; for, from my having striven for my family, much grief has come upon me.

reserved his courage to encounter, until his latest breath, the enemies of public happiness.

(signed) “ DESPRES DE WALMONT.”

We presume this to be the signature of M. Desprès de Walmont, a man of letters, born in 1757, and who died in 1812, author of the “ Epistle to the People ” (1798), and of some comedies and novels, now nearly forgotten.

* Madame de Cabris.

I have been slandered ; and I have taken a great deal of trouble, which has not met with approbation ; for amid all the marks of affection with which you disguise your disapproval, I can easily detect it.

* * * * *

“ Thus, then, is the suit lost, and our house extinct *, thanks, not to you, whom I do not accuse, but to people who love you alone, of your family, and have persecuted all its other members. Cassation of the decree still remains ; and to endeavour to effect it, you must recal your son, who has now nothing more to do here ; neither have I, although this business has cost me six months of my time, besides my rest, and health, and about 20,000 francs in money. Let him now go to

* The reader may already have remarked that, although there were two sons, the elder alone was depended upon to perpetuate the name. It was assumed that the Viscount of Mirabeau, in consequence of premature obesity, and the expectation of soon obtaining a commandery of Malta, would never marry. It is, however, by his only son, issue of his marriage with the Countess of Robien, that the name has been propagated. Peuchet is ignorant of this circumstance, as he shows, vol. i. p. 9 ; and, indeed, his whole work evinces but little study or research, except among the works most in circulation, from which he has compiled his book, without thinking of having recourse to unpublished documents, or even to published documents, when copies of them were scarce.

Victor Claude Dymas, only son of the Viscount of Mirabeau, was a man of rare probity and benevolence. He died December 27th 1831, aged forty-two years, leaving four infant children, three sons and a daughter, to the care of his young, virtuous, and gifted widow, who will render them worthy of the great name which they alone are now entitled to bear.

you ; it is your turn ; I have done more than my share *."

But in vain did the Bailli urge his brother to get the decree set aside, assuring him that the judges themselves recommended an appeal : the Marquis peremptorily refused.

" You know at present the issue of your brother's lawsuit. He is nothing but a madman, in whose hands no cause could succeed. Now, instead of calming his effervescent humours, he is pushing my brother, who throws the ball at me, to bring the matter before the council of cassation. This is again the greatest of my vexations†. The Bailli being nothing but his nephew's speaking-trumpet, teases me every other day with urging the necessity of an appeal in cassation ; he talks about the general opinion, the family honour, the disgrace of his old age, the importance of his nephew's coming hither to oppose intrigue to intrigue, and so forth. All this makes the days I receive letters, very disagreeable ones. Finally, I have made up my mind, and forbidden this appeal in cassation. I have stated, that I am ready to give the prohibition in writing, and that they may have it placarded if they like ‡."

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated July 19th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated July 27th 1783.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated August 31st 1783.

Mirabeau, however, was not to be deterred by this prohibition.

“ He is on his way hither, in addition, and comes, as he writes, *to meet my commands*. Take notice that I had written expressly, and in a letter to which they replied, 1st, that I would have no appeal in cassation; 2ndly, that if he came hither, my door should be closed against him. My brother writes me, that I must not be surprised if I see him arrive. He may live where he pleases, except at my house. I will see him whenever he wishes to speak to me, in order that he may not knock at every door for admittance; but I will grant nothing beyond this—giving him full liberty, but taking it also myself—leaving him his free will, more than of age for ten years past, but determined to hear nothing more of his affairs, either black or white*.”

Such were the hostile intentions of the Marquis. A few days after, he refused even to see his son.

“ As for this gentleman, he is I believe at Paris, for my brother wrote to me that he was to leave Aix on the 9th. If he appears at my door, he will find his name there in writing, with a note explaining my intentions, which are neither to see nor even to hear him, if I can avoid it; neither to injure nor to serve him, nor to interfere in any manner with what concerns him; to renounce giving him advice or orders; to

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 14th 1783.

give him, in short, full freedom, taking the same myself. This is not being too harsh after his formal violation of my commands, which forbade his coming hither, and informed him that if he came my door should be closed against him. I am prepared for all his evolutions, and we shall see what will happen*."

On the previous day, the stern father had made the same declaration to the government.

"I am far from desiring to trouble the King's ministers; the senseless beings who bear my name have too greatly misused their indulgence. But it is my duty to place in your hands an order which the King was graciously pleased to grant at the prayer of my children, whereby my son, on leaving the donjon of Vincennes, was at my orders with respect to his place of residence. * * *

"My son, against my will, has had a lawsuit with his wife. He has lost his cause, and in consequence has formed plans to which I have refused my approbation, as I did my consent to his coming to Paris, stating my reasons for such refusal. His means of action are not mine. But he has come to Paris to receive, as he states, my commands from a less distance. I do not complain to you of this disobedience; but I renounce henceforward, all intention of serving him in my own way, as well as all authority over him. He

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 20th 1783.

is more than thirty-four years of age, and is married. I have given him the share of my property which my means have permitted ; I punished him when I thought he deserved it ; I forgave him when I thought he would return to the order of his duties ; and I have withdrawn him from the unfortunate difficulties in which he had involved himself. I had even put him in the way of again uniting himself to his wife ; and in a situation to regain the esteem of the province in which he will, some day, have estates. I have placed him in connexion with all the sound members of his own family. My task is completed. It is for him henceforward to pursue the line of conduct he considers most beneficial to himself. I can serve him no more, nor guide him, nor be answerable for him. Under these circumstances, I return the order, and beg you will have the goodness to lay at the King's feet my very humble thanks for the favour he vouchsafed to grant me, of disposing of my son under his royal authority *."

Anxious to close our account of this lawsuit, we shall now relate only the principal circumstances which remain to be told, but without entering into details, and without comments, or quotations.

Mirabeau's arrival in Paris, and his known intention of appealing, greatly alarmed the Marignane family, who feared, and with very good reason, the effect of

* Letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to M. Amelot, dated September 19th 1783.

such an appeal, and the publicity which would be given to the Cases for Counsel, and to the pleadings. All sorts of intrigue were employed to deter the obstinate appellant. The reader may see in Peuchet's work*, the denunciation, as false as it was disgraceful, written October 20th 1783, to M. Lenoir, by the Procureur-général Leblanc de Castillon, who had been hissed in the person of the advocate-general he had sent to represent him at Aix. About the 20th of February, Mirabeau circulated a Case, which had been printed at Lyons during a rapid and secret journey he made to Dauphiny, of which this impression was not the sole object. No sooner was the distribution of the Case begun, than it was interrupted by the board of directors for printed books at Paris, under pretence that an ordinance existed prohibiting the publication of petitions on appeal in cassation, until they had been answered.

Mirabeau appealed to the keeper of the seals, with whom he had, but without success, a very warm conversation, in which, if we are to credit his own statement, he spoke much less as a suppliant party to a lawsuit, than as a tribune, a writer upon public law, and even as a legislator†. He likewise failed in an

* Vol. ii. p. 252.

† The reader may convince himself of this by reading from page vii. to page xiii. of the Preface to "Case of the Count of Mirabeau, suppressed," &c. 1784. Octavo.

application which he made to the King, in May 1784. He therefore went to Belgium, where he republished his Case, to which he added a narrative of what had passed between him and the keeper of the seals, not very flattering to the latter. He secretly introduced into Paris fifteen hundred copies of this production, and M. de Miromesnil, though personally attacked in it, did not take very strong measures to prevent its circulation. Mirabeau, on this occasion, committed an act of revenge as unnecessary as it was dangerous, and without deriving the least advantage from it: for his petition was rejected, and he increased the number of his enemies, as well as the reputation for turbulence and audacity which he had acquired by his former feats.

In closing this painful recital, we shall here state all that remains to be told concerning Madame de Mirabeau, whose name we shall never afterwards allude to in the remainder of our work.

After her separation, she continued to reside successively in the town of Aix, and at the neighbouring chateaux of Marignane, Tourves, Tholonet, and Bar, where her time was spent amid parties and fêtes, the bustle of which did not keep off ennui, as is proved by her letters already quoted, as well as by several others in our possession. After the striking ovation which followed Mirabeau's election at Aix, March 13th 1789, the

le went in a body to the hotel Marignane, and a
 rous deputation waited upon the Countess in the
 of the rest, to beg that she would return to her
 ind. That which this well-meant but tumultuous
 I could not effect, Madame du Saillant attempted
 ds the end of 1790. Letters were written by her
 er brother, and the negociation was in all proba-
 about to succeed, when Mirabeau's unexpected
 put an end to it. His widow emigrated shortly
 with her father, and spent several painful years
 ile and poverty. Having returned to France
 nber 27th 1796, her first care was to write to
 me du Saillant. In the extracts given in a note,
 e found the only facts worth mentioning *.

fter the lapse of time that has gone by, and the events which
 assed since you heard of me, my dear sister, you will doubt-
 surprised to hear that I am so near you †. Not that I have
 ad any opportunity of bringing myself to your recollection,
 hearing of you; but I was not fortunate, and all my attempts
 nsuccessful. I am totally ignorant of all that concerns you,
 an assure you, that it is one of the troubles I have felt the
 mong all my others, of which I ought not to complain, my
 ving been that of so many others. With what part shall I
 telling you all I have to say to you, my dear sister, for I
 ou will always be so, notwithstanding my change of circum-
 . I feel that my heart is always the same towards you.
 nd events teach me how to appreciate better the friendship
 idness which you lavished upon me during the happy days I
 with you. That interval of my youth always affects me
 rer I think of it, and it is, in truth, one of the thoughts
 occurs to me the oftenest. * * * *

* * * *

† This letter was dated from Lyons.

Madame de Mirabeau having, by her second marriage, become Madame de Rocca, obtained, in June 1797, the erasure of her name from the list of emigrants. But she was soon after overtaken by a fresh misfortune: M. de Rocca died, the 24th of Pluviose, year VI., from the neglected consequences of a fall from his carriage. His widow expresses the deepest grief at his loss, in letters now in our possession.

Shortly after this event, she went to Paris, and took up her abode with Madame du Saillant, at the Hotel Mirabeau, where she found the royal luxury of the sixteenth century preserved untouched in the chamber of Margaret of Valois, to whom the fair refugee compared herself, not, however, on account of her beauty and gallantries, but from the vicissitudes of a toilsome

“ I am going now, my dear sister, to speak to you of myself. Had I sooner attended to decorum, I should have begun by informing you of my marriage. I have no longer the honour of bearing your name; but I am not less attached to you—not less your sister. I have married the Count of Rocca, a worthy and excellent man, who has acquired great military renown as an officer in the service of the King of Sardinia, and possesses the esteem of all honest men. He constitutes my father's happiness, and to him do we owe our existence for more than three years that we have been together. I have a son upon whose life I now begin to build hopes, though his is a weak age, as I have already learned to my cost*. My husband being a foreigner places me in a situation different from that of the other emigrants who return to France; and makes me hope that I may successfully claim my rights upon my father's property. This is the reason which has induced me to quit him for a short time†.”

* This child died at Lyons soon after.

† Unpublished letter from Madame de Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated November 30th 1796.

life, and of domestic broils, arising from the dangerous isolation of a virtual divorce, and from her taste for, and practice of, the arts and belles-lettres. She soon returned to the old domestic habits which she had always regretted, and became more warmly attached than ever to Madame du Saillant, and her numerous and beautiful family. She also conceived a great affection for a child whom her host and hostess treated like one of their own, because Mirabeau had adopted, and bequeathed him to their kindness. Madame de Mirabeau—for she had resumed this name—even went so far as to bequeath by will to this child, all the disposable part of her fortune, forming a very considerable legacy, but which a defect of form rendered void. She lived in this manner three years, often melancholy, still oftener gay, according to the variations in her delicate health, and in her affairs, the settlement of which was attended with difficulties. However, her mind was always occupied with “her Mirabeau;” a return the more remarkable, from the circumstances of her being acquainted with the correspondence from Vincennes, which, at this period, had already been published several years, and in which Madame de Mirabeau is horribly calumniated. She never ceased surrounding herself with the letters of her first husband, with portraits of him, and with his favourite music, which she sang with still admirable voice and art. Being at length suddenly seized with an acute

disease, she expired, after a few hours of suffering, having scarcely completed her forty-eighth year, on the 5th of Ventose, Year VIII. (March 6th 1800), in the room and in the very bed formerly occupied by Mirabeau, whose memory inspired her each day with more passionate regret.

A strange fatality had severed their bonds. Madame de Mirabeau, like the other members of the family, had misunderstood her husband who, as he himself admits, "was of too high and too unequal an intellect for her." Intellectual but frivolous, sensible but unsteady, less artless than timid, thoughtless rather than sincere, impressible rather than feeling, caressing yet not affectionate, obstinate though without bitterness, vain though free from pride, not hating but prejudiced, more strict in morals than in appearances, better endowed with amiable qualities than with solid virtues, gentle, affable, kind, and benevolent :—such was Madame de Mirabeau. That which alone kept her from her husband was her weakness, which made her unable to resist her father's selfishness, the importunities of the collaterals, the pleasures of society, and the intoxication of flattery. At a later period of her life, the severe lessons of age and misfortune effaced her defects, and perfected the better qualities of her nature. It cannot be doubted that her return to her first husband would have secured for both a peaceful, honourable, and happy domestic existence ; and it was, perhaps, only necessary for

Mirabeau's widow to advance in years, in order to reach the level of the name she had taken, and of which she became worthy as soon as it formed the sole object of her pride.

We now close the first division of our work, the two divisions of which, according to the plan we have traced, bear a character essentially different from each other. In fact, the period we have now reached, terminates, in our opinion, Mirabeau's private, and begins his political life. A few brief explanations will, we trust, suffice to justify our making this distinction concerning which, independently of our plan and our particular object, we shall not differ from those readers whose suffrages we are most ambitious to obtain.

From the very birth of Mirabeau to the period of his lawsuit at Aix, none but imperfect documents have hitherto served to let the public into the secret, well or ill understood, of the private life of this wonderful man.

Thus, in the justification written in March 1st 1778, to which we have so often alluded in the course of this work, and which certainly constitutes the very best ornament of the Vincennes correspondence, Mirabeau himself gives a full account, and draws a very highly coloured picture of the vicissitudes of his life, from his infancy to the first day of his confinement at Vincennes. After this, come the details contained in the letters published by Manuel. Next appear two

thick quarto volumes containing the judicial statements or cases, published during the two lawsuits—the one of revision at Pontarlier, the other for a separation at Aix. These volumes have mostly remained in the hands of a few booksellers; but their contents have been republished in various collections of celebrated causes *, also by Peuchet in 1804, and by Vitry in 1806, though with very different feelings: the former as the vindictive contemner, the latter as the blind admirer of a man whom neither understood. Both failed in their object; for the one saved Mirabeau's memory by endeavouring to tarnish it, the other degraded by his attempt to elevate it.

These different volumes of judicial Cases, and private letters furnish a very inaccurate, but at the same time a most circumstantial account of Mirabeau's private life, from its earliest years to a period comprising more than three quarters of his existence. These divers materials, being thus before the public, have formed the groundwork of every biography of Mirabeau which has preceded ours. As the individual whose life they were recording was so celebrated, those who have written about him were anxious to omit no fact supplied by these documents; and each, full of his own feelings, and guided by his particular notions, either did not or would not discover what was naturally to be suspected

* Among others in the collection edited by the late Maurice Méjan.

in these sources of information. The writers, desirous of praising Mirabeau, have either taken for granted all he said in his own favour, or allowed a condemnation to be passed upon his character and conduct, provided his genius and services were not denied. Others, on the other hand, have believed, collected, and published nothing but what was unfavourable to him. The pure truth cannot, therefore, exist in the works of either of these writers; and the species of fatality which, aided by Mirabeau's natural violence, and early misconduct, never ceased to influence his existence, seemed to ordain that he alone, or almost so, of the great number of master spirits who have adorned the world, should appear to posterity in all the nakedness of his private life, and be placed in such a light as to throw the beauties of his mind and character into the shade, whilst it made their deformities stand out in prominent relief.

We have stated elsewhere, that for the very reason that our predecessors, eagerly grasping at materials placed by publicity into their hands, without choice, have drawn a most minute, but totally false, picture of Mirabeau in private life; we considered it our duty to be also very minute in giving that exact truth which others had violated; and to follow these writers step by step, exposing their errors one by one. This no person can really do except ourselves. In a word, we undertook to notice every fact, give every argument for

and against it, and support our own conclusions on whichever side they might lean, with such evidence as impartial posterity always waits for until it is obtained, and then passes its final judgment.

But on this particular point, the natural limits of our work were defined. That we should discuss every thing that our predecessors had advanced, was both our right and our duty. The moment they were silent on any point, for want of documents, we conceived that we also ought to remain silent; for we are not disposed to admit that every part of the private life of a celebrated man, necessarily belongs to the public. The writer who respects both, ought not to tell every thing. He ought not to cast a shade over the immortal memory of a great name, and pamper the universal curiosity which that name excites, by relating certain particulars which, with reference to other men, are carefully buried in the secrecy of the family circle. Thus, in what relates to Mirabeau, his political career, so vast even in its brevity, is linked to a sufficient number of noble actions, and calls up a sufficient number of elevated thoughts, for it to be neither necessary nor proper to enervate its history by frivolous anecdotes, and domestic broils.

If, from this, our profession of faith, it were, however, inferred that we have studied to conceal every thing injurious to the memory of Mirabeau, and to disclose the facts alone which are honourable to him—in a

word, that we have written nothing but a panegyric, we beg to state, that such inference would be totally at variance with truth.

The explanations which we have given are as unquestionable as they are convincing. Far from seeking to present facts only in a light favourable to Mirabeau, we have exposed them in their true colours to whatever inference they might lead. We have neither invented nor exaggerated what was good ; we have merely stated the fact, and supported it with proof. Neither have we denied, or increased what was evil : we have either candidly admitted it, or peremptorily disproved it by evidence.

Finally, we have been measured but accurate, partial, but conscientious—chaste, but sincere. We boldly affirm that not a single fact has been omitted or disguised throughout the whole of our narrative ; and we challenge, in this respect, all possible contradiction.

We shall pursue the same course with regard to the volumes which are to follow. In writing Mirabeau's public life, we shall relate every public fact, already known or unknown, if we are convinced of its truth. But we shall confine ourselves to this ; for we are now writing for the chastened page of history.

What more have we to say ?

That Mirabeau, in the second part of his private life, was precisely what we described him in the first : obliging and affable, confiding and generous ; as kind

and easy tempered, as he was violent and impetuous; as ready to do good, as he was slow to believe and quick in forgetting evil; as warm in friendship, as he was incapable of hatred and revenge; as passionately fond of virtue, as he was the slave of his own passions.

We will further add, that Mirabeau, whom some writers have represented as a furious gamester, a low debauchee, and a voracious glutton, could not keep himself awake when engaged in play, hated all kinds of debauchery, breakfasted upon tea, and dined in ten minutes at the most sumptuous tables, where, it is true, he fascinated the guests for hours together, by an eloquence, which, his friends say, was even more brilliant in private conversation than in the tribune.

We must now look at the other side of the picture.

A great stigma, which is but too well founded, remains attached to Mirabeau's memory, on account of the looseness of his morals, and the disordered state of his private affairs.

1st. On account of the looseness of his morals.

His passion for women, amounting to a species of frenzy, led him to form connections without number. This was a deplorable propensity, no doubt, but more to be lamented than imputed to dishonourable feelings for it was in a great measure involuntary, or, to speak more correctly, entirely physical. It was the result a complaint, well known to the medical faculty, leading to uncontrollable physical passion. It had afflicted 1

from his youth upwards, and appeared even some hours after his death—a strange fact, assuredly, but well authenticated.

2nd. An account of the disordered state of his private affairs.

Being always poor, and incapable of being provident, or imposing privation upon himself—being always excited by various wants, loving to excess the splendour of affluence, and trusting always to the future whilst he was careless of the present, he borrowed and spent much money, and scarcely ever paid his debts.

The particulars of the *private*, which we may be able to add to the *public* life, would give the reader no further information than he has already obtained: that is to say, for instance, that subsequently as well as prior to 1783, Mirabeau contracted many debts, and engaged in a great number of intrigues of gallantry. Whence, therefore, the necessity of adding to this general, but confused notoriety? Ought we to mention names? This would be a new scandal, inexcusable, because quite useless. Ought we to withhold names? Then we should be writing a mere ordinary romance. And for what class of readers would these unnecessary and improper details be given?—for posterity, before whom the obscure biographer may perchance appear in the train of the great man? Why, posterity would require to know nothing of Mirabeau but his public labours. For our contemporaries? If some of these

urge us to speak out, others urge us to silence. We entreat the latter, in whose chaste scruples we sincerely join, to understand and justify our silence. To the former we beg to observe, that Mirabeau has already supplied them with a sufficient number of "psychological studies:" that writers enough, without including us, undertake to give them every variety of such studies; and that "if they require five-act dramas, let them go to the theatre *."

Henceforward, therefore, we shall entirely change the form of our narrative. Hitherto we have loaded our text with extracts from the family letters in our possession, whence we have derived the advantage of presenting Mirabeau's private life to our readers in a new form, characterising both persons and facts, besides furnishing evidence of all we have asserted. It has also enabled us to give variety to our work, as well as an unexpected character, extremely original and intellectual. In future, we must almost wholly abstain from applying to this source of information, in order that we may not fall into an abuse, which, we trust, we have hitherto avoided. It may be necessary here to add, that after the termination of the lawsuit at Aix, Mirabeau had but little communication with his father and uncle, who, from that period, scarcely interfered with his public life *.

* Letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau,

† Among the documents published with Mirabeau's own sanction

But will it be said that we ought rather to have sacrificed every thing that related merely to his private life?—or shall we be reproached with having confined Mirabeau to a too narrow circle of vision?—with having given weak and thin touches to our picture, instead of the bold and broad pencilling necessary to paint a personage so imposing in history? We have elsewhere explained our intention, which, as we follow it up, has become more and more to us a labour of love. We have described the individual such as a deep study, which no one had before undertaken, or could possibly have undertaken, has made him appear to us. We have striven to restore to the great man that of which unjust prejudice had deprived him; and we have not feared, in showing him to be a better man, to make him appear less; for we are not of those who think that glory may suffice without goodness, and genius be independent of virtue.

We are bound to say, in conclusion, that our future sacrifices are wholly confined to the family correspondence. Exclusively of this omission, we shall continue

relative to his life subsequently to 1783, no mention is made of his domestic differences, except in the "Letters to Chamfort," (Paris, year V.) pp. 45, 84 and 88. The brief allusions here refer to a judicial instance, relative to a pension which Mirabeau claimed as his only means of support, but could not obtain. The decision was in his favour; but being unable to reap the benefit of this decision without a personal process against his father, he took no further steps, but continued to live, precariously and in poverty, upon the

our labours as we have begun them, avoiding, as much as possible, transcriptions from documents already published, and making great use of unpublished materials. And although the character of our work, in the succeeding volumes, will undergo a slight alteration, we trust that it will not weaken the reader's confidence in our truth and good faith.

APPENDIX TO VOL. III.

FRAGMENTS OF THE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS FROM THE MARQUIS OF MIRABEAU TO THE MARQUIS LONGO.

No. I.

OBSERVATIONS OF THE WRITER UPON HIMSELF.

WHEN the passage in your letter alluding to my pretended eloquence, was read to me, (it was in the evening) I exclaimed :— “ Good God ! I never persuaded any body in my life.” I perceived that those about me smiled, which makes me think that they slander me behind my back. But I can safely make oath :—1st. That I never in my life knowingly maintained a paradox ; my conscience would nauseate at such a thing, which is base and mortifying to the human mind, and resembles a walk in the courtyard of a madhouse. The moment I discover that a man is formed of argument for mere argument’s sake, or he has been denounced to me as such, I can no longer listen to him : judge then if I would follow his example. I always love to take an interest in everything : at the theatre, in conversation, in looking or in listening, unless I take an interest, I am always thinking of something else ; but I generally feel interested in everything. Though feeling is often a bad logician, it is never a wilful deceiver.

2ndly. I am as obstinate, as a woman in labour is strong. A single question awakens a multitude of ideas ; the explosion is strong, the expression confined, and I am thought to be in a passion, when I am only in a pet. Like a schoolboy serving at mass, who

repeats only the last words of the responses, my reply is ready before my opponent has reached his fourth syllable, and I am forced to listen to particles, adverbs, and circumlocutions—and this is called listening ! Perhaps, in your lively country, you have no unpackers of logic ; here they abound. A lady once said to me :—“ Your genius is to us what God was to Moses upon Mount Sinai : it never speaks to us but through a burning bush ! ” The same person observed, as she listened to the reading of my *Economics* : “ A tumbler is given to you that you may help yourself to a glass of water. You pour the liquid from too great a height, or too rapidly, or too abundantly, so that you only splash the water about and none remains in the glass.” Such things are said only to those who laugh as they recognise the just application to themselves. Now, Sir, you may judge whether or not this resembles persuasive eloquence !

Letter dated from Bignon, November 12th 1776.

No. II.

ON A PROJECT CONTEMPLATED BY THE WRITER OF PUBLISHING A GENERAL COLLECTION OF HIS WORKS.

You may compare me to the man who, when a hundred years old, begged that death would grant him time to complete a wing that he was adding to his house ; but I assure you that if letter-writing, and business did not absorb the whole of my time, I should soon complete the business. I am further careful to take very laborious walking exercise every day, in order that my organs may not become rusty ; and I cannot think consecutively when alone—therefore my walks are so much lost time. I bring forth and twist about many involuntary ideas. A couple of months ago, for instance, I caught myself, on a day of pain and annoyance, suddenly composing, without being aware of it, the following stanza to a vaudeville tune :—

En quoi consiste la sagesse ?

Dans les succès.

En quoi consiste la vieillesse ?

Dans les regrets.

Pauvre homme, tant que je vivrai,

Sage ni vieux je ne serai.

You will now fancy me the very patriarch of *improvisatori*; but as you love to see me in my letters, here I am. I well know that time deceives us, especially in old age, which shortens it as it shortens the body. Time presents a hard surface to youth, a rough one to mature years, and a slippery one to old age; but, when the worst comes to the worst, we should especially avoid being uncomfortable. Now, either we do not exist, or we still wish and hope for something. My works, therefore, and the hope that they may do some good, will always, at least I hope so, hold out to me in life a sort of freshness of prospect.

I am well aware that you flatter me; still, notwithstanding my innumerable inaccuracies of style—which is half figure and metaphor—my taste for proverbs, quaint sayings, and forged words, at the bottom of all my rustic jargon you will find something of truth, and of that truth too which comes to us from God, and appertains to superiority. Nevertheless, I have never claimed, nor had any right to claim the title of Universal Interpreter, or to enter into competition with the trumpeter of the day of judgment. But let every one follow my example, and say his best to his fellow-creatures; and, at last, the whole world will be well-informed.

No. III.

Believe me, it is not necessary to go very far in search of something new from other men; for scarcely a man exists who cannot teach us something. Though I am well aware of this, I practise it badly, because if I were to do otherwise, I must not wholly live upon my own brains. Now, it is not presumption which prevents me from gleaning in the fields of others, but exuberance. At the same time that I am very wild and refractory, when called upon to pay the indirect tax which the self-love of others, or conventional merit or advantages, attempt to impose upon me, any individual who can reason, may pull out the spigot of my stores, and all runs out. Since I have become old, I the more readily excuse this in myself, being a sort of political Boerhaave whom people consult, and charity blames me for it. But if, with the facility which God has given me for appropriating the property of others, I had been

able to seek it out and contain myself within bounds, I should now be very rich.—*Letter dated from Bignon, November 25th 1777.*

No. IV.

I have greatly delighted in literature, to which I applied myself in the strength of my youth ; that is to say, from the age of twenty-three to that of twenty-eight, under an excellent master. I have written poetry, as every lively and ardent spirit does at a particular age. But what is more, I was well acquainted with the art and delicacies of our true versification, dignified to a supreme degree, but of which the admirers of Voltaire have not the slightest notion :—I was acquainted with it, I say, far beyond what I could execute. Yet I practised much in this way. I wrote a poem upon war, the only profession I was allowed to pursue till I was twenty-seven years old. I have allowed nothing of this to be known, because, having a great respect for all prejudices even to their very roots, I submitted to the one termed *barbarous*, which rejects notable *beaux-esprits*. I felt that a man was bound to render an account of his advantages, that he who obtained a great deal from society ought to appear ready to give something back ; and that a man's own reputation ought to be the consequence, not the object of his labours. I therefore risked publicity in politics, science, and the duties to society. This succeeded ; I therefore left my poetry in the closet, and I think I have gained by so doing. I did not send you my poor couplets as an impromptu, but as a highly philosophical portrait of myself. Concerning Italian poetry, this is what I have to say. Having sent for M. Buonamici to learn Italian by reading it, for instruction books and I are not cousins, I asked him if it would take me long to learn the language. He replied that this depended upon circumstances.

"If you are clever," said he, "it will not take you long ; but *if* you are stupid, it *will* take you long."

I was then twenty-five years old, and thought myself clever. He gave me Cardinal Bentivoglio's letters, which are delightful, being written in the most easy and natural style. Finding however your prose too long. I asked him for Tasso ; he replied that I should not

be able to understand a word of it. Why I understood it instinctively from my very birth ! When any thing stopped me, I stuck a bit of paper upon the margin and went on. I never opened a dictionary. In a short time both my notes and Buonamici disappeared. In this manner, I read Ariosto, Petrarch, Dante, and I know not what besides ; and I did not become reconciled to prose until I fell in with Frate Timoteo in the *Mandragora*, which I believe is by Ariosto. Since that period, I have read your historians, &c. ; but all this has been absorbed, with every other species of literature, in the ocean of my Economics, which alone could keep me afloat, amid business and care. You would be pleased with the collection of Italian books in my library, and I have the highest respect for the literary genius of your nation, although in works of intellect, as in every thing else, it is the bundle of sticks untied.

(Letter dated from Bignon, November 25th 1777.)

No. V.

DIFFERENT CONSIDERATIONS UPON RELIGION.

Although we differ in opinion, I do not see what should prevent us from alluding to this great matter, and treating it between us in a political sense only. We are both solitary, it is true ; but the sibyl judged much better in solitude than she would have done in the public squares. Let us therefore be like the casuists, who are allowed to say any thing to throw light upon a question.

Whether there be internal conformity or not, a thing belonging to our thoughts, and over which no one has any control, I know that you are a virtuous man, and will some day regret such consequences as I shall make evident to you. I am no devotee ; neither is it in such a school that a man learns usefully to defend religion ; and if I had the happiness to be so thoroughly master of myself as to be a really exemplary character, I would give the credit of it to a probity accessible to the emulation of those around me, of an age to be alarmed at rigourism. I should be very unwilling that my virtue were attributed to supernatural assistance, to ecstatic motives in which not the slightest weakness, imperfection, or absence of mind is tolerated, and which are thought to signify entire perfection.

Such is my profession of faith, but I do not think myself less vested with the strength to tell and convince you that one of the great faults in deed, if not in will, which a man can commit, is to say the least thing that may tend to weaken around him the opinion of a religion entirely holy, which announces an only God, the Author of all good, prodigal of charity, and the centre of all light—a God who will be only loved and obeyed, and who, in his commandments to man, has impressed nothing upon him but the love of his neighbour, and social good order; whose will is that the human species shall form but one body, of which he is the Father, and each individual a member, receiving, equally with his brethren, a share of the love and Almighty power of the Universal Father. This religion, uniting all its members in one spirit, is simple in its sacrifices, submissive and affectionate in its dogmas, charitable and constant in its discipline. It summons all mankind round the same table, to the communion of bread; it sanctifies and consecrates every act of human life; it embraces and renders, in some degree, divine, all the bonds of society.

* * * * *

You will perhaps think that I am out of my senses: 1st, in speaking Latin before Franciscan friars; 2ndly, in sending you this prosopopeia; 3rdly, in entering upon a subject on which I am sure to have all the talk to myself, unless I would do as he did, who drew his sword to fight his own shadow. But I assure you, that when this chapter accidentally falls under my pen, I give no quarter to my opponent. You would not become this opponent, I am sure; yet it is impossible that, at your age, you can have weighed, as I have done, all the political consequences of levity upon this matter, which I consider the most important of those to be set upright, and supported by instruction—my great and only remedy for every thing.

(Letter dated from Bignon, November 12th 1776.)

No. VI.

Be assured that all social bodies and societies whatever, that are not fairs, caravans, or markets, believe in the immortality of the soul, and in a state of future reward and punishment. Man is led to it

of himself, as a consequence of his ambition never to lose but always to acquire, and by that sensibility which abhors the idea of the destruction of its own idols—of what it loved and ought to love and respect. I am only speaking politically. Upon this foundation all religious rites are so many valuable and indispensable bonds which connect men together. But fraud, and fanaticism—where is the remedy? Where?—why in religion itself. The people will invent superstitions for themselves without your aid, wherever debauchery and infidelity, with their horrid din, do not annihilate fear and hope. If the hail threatened the gauzes and waxen dolls of the palace, as it threatens the harvest, you would soon see these laughing puppets run at the sound of the church bells like the men of the farm. Fear and hope will create superstitions, and superstitions will create rogues. Hope makes angels white, fear makes them black; and as there exists more hope than fear, superstitions will be black, gods cruel, and modes of worship sanguinary, or disgraceful and licentious, which is just as bad. Man, I tell you, must have something to look to beyond life: the good must have a place of refuge, the evil-disposed or the frolicsome, a chastiser. The man therefore who is born in a community, and owes every thing to a community, is born in a religion, and owes every thing to a religion. Let him first respect it as his mother: if it raves, let him venerate it; if it displays vice, let him cast his cloak over it. If he feels the strength and vocation of a reformer, there is only one course for him to pursue: 1st to instruct, 2ndly to instruct, 3rdly to instruct, and always instruct. The knowledge of *rights* and *duties*, founded upon *possession*, and constituting *property*, is the foundation of natural religion, as the latter is that of every other. Fortunately nothing requires reform with us, except abuses purely human. Such abuses will exist always and everywhere; but this must not deter us from striving against them, but only in the manner I have described—by giving instruction. And in this, as in every thing else, a state reformer is nothing but a dangerous madman, if he supposes he can do every thing. The wise man well knows that he cannot and ought not to fill any more than his own leaf in the great book of life, and that he must fill it with truth, if he possibly can. However, as I used to tell my venerable mother, who, though a *strong-minded* woman, was always pious—but of an elevated piety, always considering the nearest confessor the

best,—believers and unbelievers may shake hands: the former may cry out, “O God, increase my faith!” and the latter exclaim, “Those rascally Jews seem to remain on purpose to create a prejudice.” He who thinks he is laughing at the orvietan, laughs only at the mountebank selling it. On both sides, I mistrust the security of those who seek to levy troops; but I am of opinion, that to lead a good life is the best mode of soon agreeing in heart and mind with the simple-minded; and I have experienced that this renders us internally incompatible with destructive reasoners.

(Letter dated from Paris, January 19th 1777.)

No. VII.

Fear nothing on the subject of bigotry. At no period have the popular devoutness of the Italians, and their predilection for calling upon God for assistance, passed for proofs of their piety. The morals of a people are the real pledges of their religious feeling, as they are the means of its preparation. Let us have morals, and religion will come of itself. But how is it possible that for the last thousand years Italy could have any morals? We must go back to the time of Theodoric, to find in that country even a transient flash of government directed towards its natural object. All the rest is nothing but a tissue of hostile precautions, views of dismemberment and of tyranny, defensive measures, and preparations for war. No sovereign is truly legitimate except him who is called to the throne by the will of the people, or who succeeds to the power which his father had obtained before him. All sovereigns, not really legitimate, run the risk of being forced to adopt tyrannical precautions. Now, of these precautions, the most certain are those of corruption, *per par parem querit*. Every corrupt man is essentially a tyrant, being a usurper by deed or will, of the right of another. He is therefore attached by analogy, convenience, hope, &c.; and if the worst should come to the worst, he is less formidable to the usurper than any other individual. I think, then, among your idlers and men of the world in Italy, you have many base men, many atheists or infidels, and many both active and narrow-minded beings, calculated only for intrigue. I perceive much talent among them, but without connexion, and

of a kind incapable of acquiring great and profound merit and true glory. I thought they possessed, and I think so still, more than any other nation, an aptitude for imbibing the truths of religion, together with the knowledge of rights and duties, and consenting to the duties of this knowledge; but I also think them more disposed than any other nation, to say with the utmost sincerity, *video meliora, proboque, deteriora sequor*, and to ridicule the credulity of those pretended enthusiasts who believe that the Niquean reign could be realised.

When I say that religion is the first social bond, I do not mean the first in date, but the principal. Every reflecting Economist must admit this. Our principles embrace all nations—the whole human species generally. In the supposition that indolence, habit, and the impulse of the moment, or, at best, the loquacious philosophy of the GREAT PERHAPS suffice for the cit whose feet are warm and his bread baked, it is certain that all dwellers under heaven—oneself, one's property, and one's expectations, are too tightly wound up between fear and hope, between every good and every evil, too much exposed to overwhelming causes, for us not to care about a hereafter. See the mariner at sea, about to expose himself to great danger. At the sight of some unexpected object of magnitude, the soul goes beyond its sphere: here comes the attraction of the shortest forms of prayer for assistance, and of the commonest recipes. The sign of the cross is the best invented of all forms of prayers, and the easiest of all preservatives. Astrology, divination, magic—all human errors, in short, are proof to us that man will be religious in spite of us; but he will be so in his own way—at the instigation of his fear, which is the evil principle, the candle to the devil, the demon priest. I have already stated this. A bad form of worship makes bad worshippers, and the bad are not sociable. Believe me, my excellent friend, I would not attempt to make men more alike in opinions than in features; but there are certain general features which must be the same in all. All have two eyes and two ears; and if one half of the human race fancied they looked well with a scar, or took into their heads to paint their bodies red, whilst the other half painted them black, there would immediately be two parties. I admit the same thing to exist morally: filial respect, that for old age, that for masters, chastity,

good faith, the common utility, and many other duties—these are the true social bonds; but all this must have root in a special and direct commandment from God, not only because this is—for nature says it is—but because it must be. If the God of our soul, of our appetites, or of our dread, does not say this, he will say something else; for say he must, or else not exist. And thus, as I require man in all his possible entireness, I must elevate his mind; and the great motives which effect this are all external, and the further they are off, the further they extend his mind. I defy you to do away with the religion of an oath. * * * * Yet to whom is this religion addressed? To the living God of man, in man, and before man, and from whom man turns with difficulty. * * * *

It is, therefore, in awakening his good faith, deifying his duties, and supporting their unity by all the rules of brotherly love, that religion constitutes the principal and real bond of human communities. With regard to rites and conformity, let us be equitable and enlightened, and they will then cost us little, and vex us still less.

(Letter dated Paris, March 31st 1778.)

NO. VIII.

On such a subject, your devils of theologians would prove much better apostles than Voltaire or D'Alembert. In this country they are more rational, and you can tell them good home truths. It once happened to me, in the presence of my very pious mother (who was God upon earth to me), to say to an Archbishop of Aix, seated by her fireside, and holding forth with great bitterness concerning the religious affairs of the day:—

“ My Lord, I respect your sacred office, and the celestial unction transmitted from the Apostles to yourself; but I renounce, at this moment, and for my last hour, the God whom you are preaching and whose sayings you utter. The God I worship is always mild and gracious towards sin not committed in pride of heart. Even on the cross he said — ‘ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ His tenderness and care were directed to the stray sheep; he wished us to have peace, and he recommended peace to us. ‘ Suffer little children to come unto me,’ he said; and among the little children, he included the thoughtless, the mistaken, the positive,

and those afflicted with every kind of littleness of spirit. 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?' This was his manner of receiving contradiction, for none is certainly stronger than blows *."

Such, my dear Marquis, is the image of the God I adore, and would serve, and not the punctilious and cruel God of excommunications and anathemas. This goodness of my deity would have caused me to be pointed at in your country. In this, hypocritical bigots are confined to a few circles of enthusiastic or intriguing women. Be this as it may, I am not uneasy about the manner in which you got on in the business with your doctor: I shall lose nothing by it, and nothing now remains for me to do, but to thank you for having placed me in a situation to make printing in your country obtain a small notch of rational liberty.

(Letter dated Paris, May 22nd 1779.)

No. IX.

The practice of which rite, that of rational tolerance, or that of gloomy intolerance, would render society most honest, most decent, and best regulated? It is important to keep men together, and not let them go astray. You oppose to my arguments, the enthusiasts, the rigourists, and the puritans, as if we were alluding to the last century, instead of the present, in which such people have but little influence, but in which everything is in process of dissolution.

* * * * *

* Here is the same idea expressed, nine years after, in other words.

"I say to the intolerant priests: He who gave you his mission, gave only one of peace to his Apostles; he commanded them to maintain peace and charity, and brotherly love. He announced that a war would be waged against them by all the vices leagued together and unchained, but commanded them to show patience, and termed happy only the mild and pacific. All haughty opposition, and all altercation, become passion, and every passion is irreligious. Here it is that the impiety begins which makes a man deify the Baal of his heart or of his understanding, and reject the God of peace.'

"Such, my friend, is my profession of faith. He who calls me an atheist or a materialist, is a pagan; and if I stand alone, I will remain a Christian to the last."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Lamoignon, dated January 10th 1788.*

I tell you, politically, that at Thebes for the Egyptians, at Delphi for the Greeks, at the Capitol for the Romans—at Jerusalem, Byzantium, Cusco, Rheims, and everywhere else, the true political combinations which have had any power, have all derived their origin from a temple, or a mode of worship, or an expiatory sacrifice, &c. &c.; that Rome and its mode of worship have formed and preserved the West; that, as a King once said, addressing himself to me: “You are mistaken; a King clad as I am, who goes to the wars and to balls, can be head of the church by name only, and never obtain the popular sanction. I prefer having the head of the Church at Rome, because I can come to arrangements with him and make use of him.” I tell you that if I were a monarch and had great dominions separated and dismembered, I should well like to have the same dalmatic* formed the lining of the same pragmatic sanction, would well clip the wings of the ecclesiastics, like those of other poultry in the yard, lest they should fly too high; but I do it with the greatest precaution, in order not to expose myself to the derision of those mud-dabbling and screaming birds. I wish them to lead in a body, and whose ducklings, and geese, and poults, I should direct them to rear. I tell you, ladies, you are all out of your senses. I have found the human mind full of prejudices and feelings; I have seen them kiss the hats as they pass a wooden cross, and yet refuse to go to hear it in company with a tax-gatherer; and I shall leave them possessed of neither prejudices nor feelings, but defying the earth, and holding out their hands!

You say that we have received our religion from Italy; we have received many other things upon which we have lived. I need only mention a certain loathsome disease, and you will see. Have not these greatly prospered in our hands?

(*Letter dated Bignon, March 1*)

No. X.

Concerning God's glory, it can be only as apphical that it is presented in any other sense than the or

* A robe worn by Catholic deacons and sub-deacons.

when I said that its boundary was the law. As I decidedly deny to atheists their very existence, you may well suppose that I suppress God's glory for those who convert it into a Medusa's head, or the mirror of the Danish Knight. As matter, I am but a grain of sand, which, by its moving, thinks it aids the globe in its rotation. But if I interrogate my thinking faculty and my soul, I feel that God's glory is within me; it informs this thinking faculty that God has willed great Order, and that the portion of it I am allowed to know, is called Natural Order, to the laws of which I must conform in my actions, on pain of delirium and wickedness; that intelligence and free-will were given to me for no other purpose than to extend my sphere in this present mould, and not set up a fantastic and personal idol. It tells my heart, that what kindles emotion within it, touches, expands, dilates, and elevates it, belongs to its high origin, which is a breath of unction and beneficence, a ray of light, God's glory; that, on the other hand, all that closes, contracts, compresses it within itself, or attaches it to miserable illusions of habit and opinion, belongs to man, misled by the abuse of his intelligence, detached from the instinct of the brute only to degenerate. With this exception, in the firm persuasion that nothing is either great or small before the Infinitely Great, far from considering our sphere a narrow one, I look upon each individual as a universe, or, at least, as a great state. But it is not less true, that in the greatest states, the proverb says, "When every one follows his calling, the flocks are well guarded." Now, it is the means whereby each may pursue his calling that I have studied, and endeavoured to submit to the intelligence of my fellow-creatures. In refusing to listen or act in consequence, they only imitate me, who, with all my fine morality, am not a bit more serene, beneficent, or tranquil, especially *cum punita molesta est*. But I am very positive about the particular significations attempted to be attached to God's glory, although I think it quite right that this high name should be made a subject of awe, by attributing to it all that belongs to order.

(Letter dated Paris, June 28th 1785.)

No. XI.

I must tell you, that yourself and M. Spanocchi are too much for me, especially both together. At all events, my friend, I have no intention of disputing, or even discussing; but I must reflect on the two points upon which you consider us in controversy. With reference to the first, I formerly attempted to talk sentiment on the subject, not for the purpose of leading you away, but because it is a language I often use, and in man's natural state, the strongest means, I think, of persuasion in such matters. Though agreeing in the sentiment, you have, as you had a right to do, resisted its influence, because you would have to do with reason alone. To the latter I shall therefore confine myself, as I never reason but in politics.

Now, I say, do you think that democracy can administer and keep together a single family, and would you wish yours to be given up to it? If respect for old age and paternal authority are any thing, and have the right of successive usefulness to take the lead in the council, what is the cause of this? If the decadency which is in the law of nature pronounces their rejection, what will maintain the respect for authority? If force, or usefulness, who shall adjudge their respective claims, since between two contendents, one or the other must be discontented? What will maintain the credit due to an oath, the dread of perjury, good faith in private engagements? Honest people that you are, enlightened by circumstances and natural endowments, you judge of others by yourselves, and you will not perceive that, generally speaking, man must be chained up, although it is especially important that the principal link of his chain should raise, instead of crushing him—assist, instead of galling him. On this point, facts speak for themselves. Search in the history of all ages, and all places, for a hypocrite (*monstrum horrendum!*) who has not been successful. Look for a Salmoneus who could get himself accompanied by any but furies and satellites! There are two states of man: the *state of passion*, fruitful in prodigies, but always disjointed and ruinous; and the *state of reflection*, subordinate in appearance, but ultimately victorious. Now, of these two states of man, when has he been able to render propitious that

which alone insures success? Religion is necessary to politics, because the latter must be religious. Public worship is indispensable to them, because man, who is scarcely any thing more than an imitator, requires rites of some sort. All that in sound policy it is important to prevent, is the abuse of pretended communications from the Deity to the priest; and for this purpose a written law is, no doubt, requisite, and this law must be visible. The Holy of Holies and its secrecy, was one of the imperfections of the first written law; and he who goes far from the sanctuary, extends, for himself and his adherents, the influence and dominions of this false tabernacle, which is always imposing to the multitude. St. Louis refused to the bishops the support of the temporal authority for their anathemas; he tore and trampled under foot the pope's bull whereby the pontiff, as Christ's vicar, constituted himself the arbiter of thrones. What other sovereign in those times would have ventured to do one half of this? Being requested to witness the miracle of a child appearing in the Host, "If I saw it," he replied, "my faith could not be stronger than it is;" he therefore refused. This saying has remained, and the people were edified by it, because it was truly pious. The mask of hypocrisy will never yield to those who attack it in front, for its strings are behind. A blinded people will always mistake it for a face. But you must follow up hypocrisy close, until losing breath under its disguise, it flies to a place of concealment, and of itself makes room for the torch of the truly pious and always accessible brotherhood.

You have nothing to do with my metaphors, only with my argument. I tell you then that a wise man, and still more, a statesman, never allows his scruples to peep forth—quite the contrary: he makes, on every occasion, his profession of faith and of wisdom, the whole for the benefit of his own little person. Fortunately, the days are gone by when it was necessary to kiss the feet of the poor as an act of humanity. I say that, at all events, he ought to mistrust his own infidelity, just as I would advise the parson to mistrust his faith, according to the precept of the good Abbé St. Pierre, who recommended that a man should say—"This suits me for the present." In fact, the following words, which have been considered a good epigram, by being introduced into the exhortation of a monk to a dying man—"Offer your incredulity to God"—

appears to me the most judicious advice possible. There have been so many disputes about grace, and yet the field has remained open for any new disputant who wishes to rupture his uvula. Is it not the same thing concerning disputes about faith? But it belongs not to a wise man to deprive man, infinite in his fears and his hopes, of the idea and sense of a being infinite in justice and goodness, and of the hope of his own future existence in the presence and under the everlasting law of these two attributes. A politician, who has studied the human race, ought to know that all charity, which contains truth, security, probity, and other interpreters of the social connexion, is derived from hope, which latter is derived from faith, and faith from credulity; that this latter must be delicately handled, seeing that it is inseparable from man, metaphysician though he be, as without it he would be beyond the reach of discipline; that the way to prevent him from falling into any excess of this kind, is to enlighten him concerning his real interests, and not to point out his fears as vague, his hopes as vain—all which leads to nothing, and gives him confidence in nothing, and we require from him both docility and courage.

(Letter dated November 12th 1786.)

No. XII.

You are a very bad adviser, my good friend, in the poor opinion of your humble servant. Your noble expedient of exciting relaxation in the priesthood, and thereby annihilating the whole order, was that of Choiseul, and of all rash men, present and past, born and to be born. It is the remedy of emollients, which ultimately turns to putrefaction the whole mass of the blood. Recollect that the prudent Machiavel himself says, that when religion weakens in a state, that state is very near its fall. What a wise sovereign should observe against the worst of abuses, that of power over consciences, is to promote the study of letters, and require that priests should be men of learning and information, not in their own craft only, but in general literature and knowledge; also to profess a great respect for religion, and thereby rule the priests in their own sanctuary; also to require that the priests should instruct, instead of judging; also

to force the austere portion of them to be simply cenobites, prohibiting their exercise of any social power; lastly, also, when these infallible means, by being followed up, have given the sovereign his natural authority—inseparable from the motive pursued but not announced—to derive, from the canonical books and ecclesiastic decisions, the law reforming those accumulated and inveterate abuses by which the priesthood have become usufructuary possessors of the property of which they were originally only the responsible stewards; to reduce each institute to its original institution, and to lay down, in the very instruction given by the priests, the barriers that must thenceforward confine them within their proper limits, and render them the instruments of the public authority, which would despoil itself and split its own bark into fragments, if, with more or less of time and precaution, it did not deprive idleness of those resources of which that same idleness robs labour. I use this last word to exclude every species of mendicity, which, be it imperative, or exhortative, or suppliant, has always appeared to me man's degradation, both active and passive, and an enemy to work, the common patrimony of us all. You see, my friend, that I stick to my fancies. Every body has its principle of *virus*, to use your own expression: but the disease is only in the covering, and the desiccation consequent upon age, destroys the virus, instead of rendering it incurable. But we will make haste and reform even the globe itself, like Alphonso the Chaste, who lost his crown whilst he was waiting until he had settled the state of the heavens.

Adieu, my dear friend, you and I are a brace of madmen, but less so than many who think themselves very wise.

(*Letter dated Paris, July 16th 1787.*)

No. XIII.

You have seen from afar the punishment of La Barre*. Under

* The Chevalier la Barre, beheaded July 1st 1765, for having, says the sentence, mutilated a wooden cross placed upon the bridge of Abbeville. Everybody must have read the eloquent remonstrances made by Voltaire against this ferocious sentence, the execution of which the selfish and immoral Louis XV did not oppose by the exercise of his royal prerogative of pardon.

a good government, the offence would never have occurred, still less the denunciation; or if it was denounced, an order would have been fulminated by the cabinet, terming the proceedings an act of madness; and also, six months afterwards, a letter to the denunciator*, requesting him to send in his resignation. Take heed that I now speak as a politician, and not as a theologian. As a true politician, I should have doted upon St. Peter and St. Paul, but should have recommended them to pity, in their instructions, the carnal idolatry of simple-minded men, and show respect to those who, under emblems too near to human nature, adored heaven nevertheless, as beneficent and punishing evil faith; but the kicks bestowed upon the statue of Jupiter should never have taken place, I give you my honour, and still less the honours of martyrdom, &c. My principle is nothing more than that human nature requires in religion, as in every thing else, the mode of the prudent man, not that of the madman. The former leads to concord, the latter to discord, and concord is the sole business of government. It is because speculative hypothetical science cannot be cleared up by argument, that faith, or a particular gesture, is required. Peace.—Read the beginning of the chapter on Industry in the “Rural Philosophy,” seize the spirit and not the letter, and then blush at having so long worried your elder.

(Letter dated Bignon, November 3rd 1778.)

NO. XIV.

REFLECTIONS UPON DIFFERENT QUESTIONS OF PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS.

Were I not disabused about the Court of the King of Wishes, I should like to be or have been at the Court where you spent six weeks with Count Melzi †. We would nicely have reviewed this singular world. Perhaps the result of our ratiocinations would have

* Duval de Saucourt, counsellor in the Presidial at Abbeville, and accuser of the Chevalier la Barre.

† Francis Melzi, of Eril, Vice President of the Italian republic, in 1802 Chevalier and Keeper of the Seals of the kingdom of Italy, and Duke of Lodi in 1807. He was born in 1753, and died in 1816.

been, that the Friend of Men is that one among them who is the farthest from what he thinks he is. Perhaps we should have been wrong, for, in the end, all roads lead to Rome.

But Rome, in my system, is INSTRUCTION, and war does not reach it on either side. I do not allude here to civil discord, for I am of opinion that, on the contrary, this opens the road to instruction. But it seems that in the present state of almost general commotion in which we find political philosophism, the sovereigns who fear that the prevalent disease will reach their dominions, seek for foreign war, or wage it with each other, in order to get into their saddles and breathe the air congenial to them. I am not curious in newspapers, and scarcely ever read any; but having become a searcher after news, I cast my eyes, the other day, upon the *Mercure*, and there I saw that the King of Sweden attributes the insurrections * to a rescript which, being addressed to him, addresses also his nation!—or at all events the latter is named in it. I was very much tempted to send him back his sheaf †, telling him at the same time that the Emperor of China, who is as good as he is, not only allows his people to be spoken to, but speaks to them continually himself, giving them an account both of his sovereign acts and deeds, and of his private domestic affairs.

(*Letter dated Argenteuil, August 5th 1788.*)

No. XV.

You have long known, and so have I, that I am but a dreamer; but I knew not that I was a Tartar reformer, and yet I have just discovered my own politics in Tartary.

In reading the Institutes of Tamerlane ‡, which appear very insignificant to inattentive eyes, I saw, 1st, That he was the best friend possible of honest people; 2ndly, That, in his army, every ten

* The troubles which ended in the suppression of the Senate.

† The reader is aware that the Marquis of Mirabeau received from Gustavus III. the grand cross of the order of Wasa, the principal emblem of which was a sheaf of wheat.

‡ The Marquis probably alludes to a work entitled "Political and Military Institutes of Tamerlane," arranged and translated, with notes, by the learned Langles. Paris, 1787, 8vo.

soldiers elected a commander of ten, that ten of the latter elected a centurion, and ten centurions elected a captain of a thousand men ; lastly, Ten of these captains elected a general. The greatest of blessings for men devoted to obedience, is to give them the choice of their commander. 3rdly, That the hero paid the greatest respect to the chiefs and most celebrated enthusiasts of his religion, asking their counsel, giving them accounts and so forth, whereby he maintained them always in his interest, in order that they should feed and exalt the confidence of his soldiers and his own. 4thly, The great care with which the peaceable portion of his subjects were governed : that is to say, protected and assisted on urgent occasions, leaving them their prejudices, dignities and privileges. 5thly, That he was good to excess towards his family, being the best possible father and kinsman ; always in council, always surpassing every other by the confidence he inspired. Doctors of the law, military and civil chiefs, kinsmen and friends, all assisted at his councils, and all were consulted, or, to speak more correctly, admitted to think what the powerful genius of the hero had conceived, and was going to utter. Dear friend, prognosticate concerning the success of the great military expeditions of your own times, by the degree of approximation which the leaders of these same will offer you, compared with the conduct of Tamerlane.

(Letter dated Argenteuil, August 5th 1788.)

No. XVI.

As for our apparent difference of opinion upon the subject of the nobility, believe me, my dear friend, that it arises solely from the different optical points whence we severally examine the order. Nothing is more illiterate, silly, stupid, in the midst of a most ingenious people, more insolent and ridiculous generally, than the rich and idle nobles of Italy. They never had any real sovereign, never any employment. Our court and city nobles in France, are also contemptible. In the military and naval forces, they pride themselves upon their honour, which is something for the greater number, amid barbarity (for in this light must Europe be considered). The country nobles are very useful to the people, who in the rural provinces have infinite attachment to them ; an advantage which the

low vanity of the age makes them exchange for a residence in cities. Before you raise a doubt whether nobility is good, you should first ascertain whether you could prevent its existence. I laugh when I find every author stating that there is no nobility in China, where all is dynasty, ancestors, and even feudality. Oh ! how well we should agree, my friend, if we could but converse together a little. You will admit with me that the feudal system, which could never be a port for the human species, was, is, and will be a creek, a bay, a cove, an open roadstead, very salutary against the storms of anarchy ; and that no government can exist fifty years without falling into the evils of anarchy, unless it be a government of instruction, which is the only real and good *despotism*. With regard to entails, the way to diminish them, as well as the overgrown estates, is by social prosperity. When and where the toise of land is worth a hundred pistoles, palaces are soon converted, and profitably too, into shops and smaller houses.

(*Letter dated Bignon, November 3rd 1776.*)

No. XVII.

Martha, Martha, sollicita, &c. should I say to the wisest prince in Europe, the Archduke Leopold *. Sovereigns are not charged to look after the minor rights of their subjects, they are only bound to wait for the claims of the latter. They are not charged to look after the advantages of their people in detail, but to trust this to the industry of their subjects. All that the Eternal commands his substitutes here below, and places immediately under their charge, is *duration* ;—it is to ordain the social world as He ordained the physical world. Every thing, it seems, unforms and renews itself in detail ; every thing reproduces and perpetuates itself in the general mass. *Hæ tibi erunt artes.*

Place your own state, for instance, and by your example Europe and the whole world, in a situation no longer to fear the revolutions of your transient existence, or the faults of your children. All that

* Grand Duke of Tuscany, afterwards Emperor of Austria, on the death of his brother Joseph II.

appears to cause the action and reaction, the simultaneousness and the vigour of the political societies of our own times, is precisely that which constitutes their evil, and prepares their destruction. They are like a sick man, who is never so much talked of in his family and his neighbourhood, and who never occupies the attention of so many people, as the day before his death; and in proportion as they appear more active, they approach nearer to the hour of their downfall.

Thus, after the pretended fine ages of nations which have figured upon the great stage of the world, they soon afterwards disappear. The present civilisation of Europe arises from the seeds scattered at different periods, by five or six great men, who left them to take their chance. These seeds were shapeless masses in appearance, but around them the swallows of subsequent ages built ingenious but fragile edifices of straw and cement. An Edgar, a Theodoric, a Charlemagne, a Louis IX, surnamed St. Louis, a Stephen of Hungary, a Gustavus, and some others whom I have no doubt forgotten,—these are the men from whom are derived all that remains at present of political constitutions. This is the point of view to which, in the first place, you must accustom yourself. Call to mind in how many different revolutions of all kinds, the hippodromus has seen parings of pretended laws of preceding reigns, soon replaced by new registers, which, all together, instead of retarding the fall of that powerful empire, beset by no other enemies than naked brigands and its own vices, hastened its fall and entire destruction.

Thus, slender ligaments, strengthened only by the dust that covers them, hold together all the policy of your states, that of the countries which surround you, the pretended foreign equilibrium, the exhaustion of Kings and territories, and the effeminacy of nations; the fiscal system, which, though it inflicts all worldly evils upon mankind, like every other scourge, has its corrective by its side, and by heaping upon the most unworthy the metals which flow from the New World to Europe, renders this torrent, which will in the end exhaust itself like every other, less dangerous with reference to the ravages of war, than the treasures were formerly, of the mines of Mesopotamia, Mount Niphates, and Spain, which armed the cupidity of conquerors.

All these things, combined to all appearance by chance, are the

hollow walls which support the cloth that served your predecessors upon the throne, as a snare to entrap and rob the unhappy people, but which your wisdom is now making you tear to pieces thread by thread. Other potentates and other constitutions have the same and still greater defects. I shall not tell them so because they have no ears. Neither would I have mentioned it to you at first, because, with equal wisdom, you have neither the same experience nor the same influence and reputation in the world, and all these things are necessary. But now, whatever your people, or certain among them, may say and believe, your reputation is well established, therefore with you all is possible; and all that is possible with you is good. **BREAK, OH! BREAK ALL PACT WITH IMPIETY.** The times are ripe in their kind, as your reputation is in its kind. The compass, that star of physical communication, and printing, that interpreter of moral correspondence, appeared three centuries before you in order thereby to prepare the way for you. Cast your eyes over the entire universe, not for the purpose of invading it in the dreams of exaggerated self-love—you could not do so—but in order to include it in the embrace of universal charity, and to confess every thing great in Providence, every thing little before Providence.

Brought by a sense of this to your natural modesty, you will see in yourself the stone detached from the top of the mountain, which will break the colossus of false politics, and make it fall into splinters. If you possessed only your own little domains, still the first grain of wheat occupies much less space, and yet its posterity covers the surface of the entire globe. In future openly admit, promote, protect, and superintend general instruction, under the dictation of the sovereign; at the same time, draw up a constitution. This is simple; you require only to be a state carpenter, and to raise a political edifice, each member of which lends solidity to, and receives it from the whole. Extend the power of the sovereign, but limit his will. Let him be absolute in his councils, but let him not be able to alter their form. Let him appoint to all public offices, but choose his officers only from certain ranks, and let these ranks be filled by the most scrupulous competition. Let all this be bound and kept together by public opinion. It is impossible to banish the republic from the world: it would be putting down newsmongers and reports. It is impossible that the republic can ever govern well, but it forms

a good council for an absolute chief. Let the republic then be universal, general, and always subordinate. Let nothing say *no* to the sovereign, except universal reason, which, terrestrially speaking, is God.

(Letter dated Paris, September 5th 1775.)

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MEMOIRS OF MIRABEAU.

BOOK I.

WE must retrograde a little in beginning this second **P**art of Mirabeau's life, in order to give an account of **w**orks which belong to his public, notwithstanding **t**he dates which connect them with his private, life. **H**ad we noticed these before, it would have caused too **G**reat an interruption in the regular progress of our **n**arrative.

WE intend first to notice very briefly Mirabeau's **w**ritings during the ten years that preceded the period **t**o which we have brought up our work at the close of **t**he last volume: that is to say, from his banishment to Manosque to the conclusion of the law-suit in Provence. There is great diversity in these writings, **s**ome of them being mere sketches, others more **f**inished productions. Some are published, others **u**npublished. The whole of them are the fruits, more

or less mature, of the immense studies which constituted the pursuit as well as the craving of his whole life, his consolation in captivity, and the source of the vast knowledge he afterwards displayed. It was this knowledge, as profound as it was diversified, that, from the very first public debate in which he took a part, showed him to be deeply skilled in the language of constitutions—a language which those about him could only yet imperfectly lisp. Whilst these latter were just entering the career of reform and political institutions, he had already marked out their course and traced their limits, which perhaps have not yet been reached, even after half a century of experiments.

We stated, in Book IV, vol. II, p. 18, that Mirabeau composed his first work, the “*Essay on Despotism*,” at the end of 1772, during his exile at Manosque*.

* London, 1775. A volume 8vo. of 275 pages, with the following epigraph :

“*Dedimus profectò grande patientiæ documentum ; et sicut veteres ætas vidit quid ultimum in libertate esset, ita nos quid in servitute, adempto per inquisitiones et loquendi audiendique commercio, memoriam quoque ipsam cum voce perdidissemus, si tam in nostrâ potestate esset oblivisci quam tacere.*”—TACIT. VIT. AGRICOL.
(We have certainly shown a great example of patience; and as olden times have witnessed the highest degree of freedom, so we have reached the climax of servitude, deprived by informers of the pleasures of speaking and listening; and we should also have lost our memory with our voice, had it been in our power to forget as well as to be silent.)

It is not true, as some have asserted, that the “*Essay on Des-*

This production, according to the author's own account, "was written very rapidly, without plan or order, and rather as the profession of faith of a citizen than as a literary production *."

He says, elsewhere, that this work "is a too hurried production of youth, containing ideas and principles, but nothing methodical or complete†."

In another letter he mentions it in still severer terms. "I who, at twenty, dared to show myself in print, what did I write? A bad pamphlet containing some truths, and some highly coloured pictures perhaps, which evince a noble and elevated mind, with some fire of intellect; but I repeat, that this book is contemptible, for its contents do not constitute a book: it is a number of shreds and patches united without order, and stamped with all the defects of the period at which it was written. There is neither plan nor form, correctness nor method‡."

potism" was written by Mirabeau when only nineteen years old, and during his detention in the island of Rhé. (See M. Barthe's Notice, p. 5; see also "Biographie Nouvelle des Contemporains," by MM. Arnault, Jay, Jouy, &c., vol. xiii. p. 349; also "Essai sur la Vie et les Ouvrages de Mirabeau," par Joseph Mérilhon. Paris, Brissot-Thivars, 1827, p. 7. This error in the latter work is the more remarkable from M. Merilhon being incontestibly the most careful and correct of all Mirabeau's biographers.)

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to the Dutch bookseller, Mark Michael Rey, dated October 2nd 1776.

† Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. ii. p. 107.

‡ Ibid, p. 444.

No critic has judged the "Essay on Despotism" with such severity as Mirabeau did himself. By a very few quotations, we shall prove a little further on that the praises he bestowed upon it were not more exaggerated than his censure. For the present we shall only notice that just explanation of his boldness in publishing this work, conveyed in the expression "the profession of faith of a citizen," so well justified afterwards—and of his premature debut in a career, spontaneously embraced fifteen years before the events which gave it so vast a development. Mirabeau, far from agreeing with his father, "that a man must be out of his senses to write such things when under the action of a *lettre de cachet*," replied to him: "I shall always feel proud of the truly noble and courageous idea of having thundered against despotism at the very time when I was writhing under the inflictions of an arbitrary order." He even did not fear, from his dungeon, to enter into an explanation with the King himself.

"It will perhaps be stated to your Majesty, that from my early youth I have written bold things concerning the government which preceded your reign. But no one will add that I have ever spoken of your own administration but with the respect due to your Majesty; or that I raised my voice only against those maxims upon which your conduct conveys the strongest censure. Neither will they inform you of a fact,—that

the most courageous subjects are always the most essentially submissive."

The "Essay on Despotism" being the earliest of Mirabeau's compositions, is the first sign of his political vocation, and the most singular instance perhaps of a war audaciously declared against despotism by a young man bearing its yoke, and who, although he might have disarmed it, or withdrawn from its inflictions, preferred boldly to strive against it. We would willingly give a detailed account of this production, the recollection of which must soon be effaced, because most probably it will never be reprinted.

Neither are we desirous it should, because we are under no illusion concerning this hasty and rash effusion of an unprepared author, and addressed to a public not much better prepared to read than he was to write it*. The work is too imperfect; its subject

* Mirabeau was thinking perhaps of this work when he wrote, June 22nd 1784, to Chamfort:

"There is a very great difference between knowing that principles are useful, and possessing the art of persuading other men to adopt them. This art requires great preparation, and many auxiliary circumstances. An impatience, even in some degree praiseworthy, drives virtuous men to promulgate truths that strike them, from the very moment that these truths become evident, and without considering whether they appear in the order best calculated to compel the assent of every body. Nothing is more different from the order of the generation of ideas, than their investigation. A science must be already complete before its elements can be laid down. Moral truths must be familiar before they are applied to use. Languages

is treated confusedly and incompletely; there are not divisions in it either marked or perceptible; the propositions are declamatory and diffuse; their discussion is always wanting in method, often in clearness; the style is defective in ease and correctness; it evinces much more of memory than of thought, and abounds in commonplaces, emphatic exaggerations, and especially in repetitions.

Notwithstanding the blemishes in this work, we would willingly give a detailed account of it here; but a long and fruitless study has convinced us that if we would give a plan, we must invent one, and that to analyse must be to re-write it. We may add that the author himself did this, in his "Lettres de Cachet," of which we shall soon have occasion to speak.

We confine ourselves therefore to a brief sketch of the considerations scattered through the volume, separating them from frequent historical digressions, and numberless quotations, the fruits of a remarkable but crude and indigested erudition. To this we shall add such short and rapid extracts as appear to us characteristic.

The author sets out with asking "if man is inclined

existed during a long series of ages before grammars were written, which have made the study of those languages much easier for us. Books of either morals or politics must dig round and uncover the roots of a prejudice, long before comedy can extirpate it by holding it up to ridicule."—*Letters to Chamfort*, p. 15.

to despotism?" The *natural* man perhaps not—the *social* man, yes assuredly. "An inclination to be a despot is as natural to the latter as the hatred of despots is to him whom servitude has not yet perverted*."

This spirit of despotism exists even in republics, as is proved by the Romans all over the world, the British in India, the Dutch in their colonies, Venice, Genoa, and some of the Swiss cantons.

The author next asks, whether social man is good? Yes, notwithstanding what J. J. Rousseau says, "for the social state is the most worthy as it is the most happy result of man's perfectibility†." Yes, for the instinct of sociability gives man a tendency to good, and this he requires, especially to be just. What in fact could be authorised injustice but the dissolution of all society‡? Man cannot be happy without fulfilling this necessary condition of his being; and he will be always just and happy when he is enlightened concerning his real interests, which are always conformable to justice§.

What necessity however is there for discussing this point? "Whether man in a state of nature feels repugnance or not to a state of society, the latter does not the less exist. It is better then to endeavour to enlighten it, than to prove that its existence is wrong ||."

But, "if all men love to rule, they whom society

* Page 24 of the edition published in 1775.

† P. 40.

‡ P. 22.

§ P. 23.

|| P. 42.

has raised to the highest rank, must enjoy more keenly the pleasures of authority, and endeavour to extend its limits. Abuse of power therefore does not seem inconceivable: it is as natural as excess of any other passion; and its first aspect is so fascinating, that a man would readily yield to it, if reflection and experience had not pointed out its danger*.

“This general propensity to encroachment being once admitted to exist, the necessity must soon be felt of opposing the tyranny which constantly threatens us, since each of us has its germ in his heart†.”

But does not the social order, as constituted every where, except in a few republics, expose man, if not to inevitable tyranny, at least to a necessary domination?

Yes, no doubt; but subordination is not slavery.

What, in fact, is slavery? “Is it, as some have said, the alienation of freedom? Such a definition is as dangerous as it is false: for it would constitute the gift of a property in your own person, which gift is impossible. Tell the despot, who pretends that he is born absolute master of the slaves whom he oppresses, and treads under foot according to his will, to appropriate likewise to himself their pleasures and pains, their feelings, their strength, all the faculties, in short, composing the property in their persons, and his answer would perhaps be to send to you the executioner

* Page 29 of the edition published in 1775.

† P. 50.

with his axe—the sole argument of tyrants. Let us deplore his blindness and detest his principles, but let us never be persuaded by violence: for it is as disgraceful to be subjugated by violence, as it is odious to exercise it*.”

If we cannot alienate our own freedom, “still less can we barter away that of our descendants, a right of property in whose persons is not and never can be ours†.

“But it is asserted that social institutions have degenerated from the state of nature, and render men more unhappy. If we embrace this opinion, let us endeavour to discover a remedy, or at least a palliative, for the evils that afflict us. Such a search would be much more agreeable than to satirise men and their communities‡.

“Men did not intend, neither ought they to have intended, sacrificing anything by forming themselves into communities; they wished to extend, and it was their duty to extend their enjoyments and the use of their freedom, by mutual assistance and guarantees||; for they required reciprocal protection; it was a real and evident want: for nature is limited in her gifts; she distributes them with an equitable though economical

* Page 34 of the edition published in 1775.

† Page 36. “It is forgotten that a people could not have devoted themselves, much less their posterity, to misfortune, oppression, tyranny, the caprices of a fool, or the excesses of a madman.”

‡ J. J. Rousseau.

§ P. 42.

|| P. 45.

hand—that is to say, very equally, or nearly so; and were we to calculate the advantages and disadvantages physical and moral, of each individual, we should find very little difference between man and man*.”

Hence arises a necessary consequence: “rights and duties form the balance-wheel of the human species. This is not an affected display of morality, but the basis of the calculation of human society†.”

Now, in a state of society, as in a state of nature “man wishes to be happy; he wishes to enjoy, but peacefully—for tumultuous and troubled enjoyments are not enjoyments at all. We enjoy but little except as the fruit of labour; for the earth we inhabit is a kind mother, but she requires to be solicited‡.”

He who has worked, and in working has acquired wishes to preserve; this is instinctive: “for instinct tells us that the crop we have sown is ours; that whoever would deprive us of it is wicked, unjust, and an enemy whom we can and ought to resist, restrain, and deprive of the power of injuring us by all means within our reach. Instinct shows us all this, even before social combinations have taught and proved to us, for instance, that he who attacks the property of one individual, by that very act attacks the property of all§.

“ But, being too much divided between the cares &

* Page 81 of the edition published in 1775.

† P. 82.

‡ P. 95.

§ P. 96.

tillage and of defence, men have placed their property under the safeguard of a single one or of several, invested with a power, which we term *tutelar authority*; that is to say, with a power to preserve order so that the harvest may be reaped in peace; to sound the alarm in the community when it is threatened by an external foe; to unite, in short, the strength of *all* for the advantage of *all* *.

“Such is the motive of the subordination rendered to the sovereign authority to which the people have confided their defence and their police †.”

“Thus man has given himself a chief but not a master ‡.”

“In well ordained communities, men preserve their natural rights to the full extent, and acquire a greater faculty of using these rights. All that belonged to them in their primitive state still remains; all that was forbidden then is still forbidden; and this *all* amounts to nothing more than keeping and increasing one's own property, and respecting that of others §.”

But has the existence of natural law not been doubted?

* Page 97 of the edition published in 1775.

† P. 45.

‡ “The recollection of the progressive ideas which led nations to give themselves an hereditary chief, has been lost by the facility with which man adopted received customs without seeking for their origin or reflecting upon their motives. It seems to be forgotten that the right of sovereignty being solely and inalienably in the people, the sovereign is, and can be, nothing but the first magistrate of the people.”—*Lettres de Cachet*, p. 74.

§ P. 43.

“ For what truths have men not denied?—what errors have they not maintained? I shall only observe that it would be very surprising if, in the immense chain of beings, subjected to distinct, positive, and unchangeable laws, man alone had escaped this part of the will of his Creator, ‘ who,’ to use the expression of a man of great genius *, ‘ always obeys that which he has once commanded†.’ ”

Thus, there is a natural law ; and rights and duties must be deduced “ from this law, which is binding upon all, indestructible in spite of raving prejudice, and imprescriptible, whatever contradictions it may encounter in human legislations, all of which are however founded upon it ‡.

“ Nature and human institutions, passions, and legislations have jostled each other; contradictions have been piled up in heaps ; codes have been multiplied, and the knowledge of positive law has become an immense science for polished nations, a study more fatiguing to the memory than to the understanding §.”

But if natural law and positive law do not coincide, is it not the fault of the latter ?

No doubt it is. “ But why are legislations, that first necessity of man, and the plan of which is traced by nature herself, so defective, and less advanced than every other work of the human intellect || ?

* Cardinal de Retz (*note by Mirabeau*).

† P. 47.

‡ Same page.

§ P. 48.

|| P. 51.

“ Because men are constantly making sacrifices to their imagination, which seduces them more surely, and flatters their self-love more than the slow and calculated progress of cold reason ; because the exercise of this reason, as applied to meditation, is more laborious and less within the reach of most men than the workings of the imagination * ; because men of profound minds are and will be very rare in every age. Thus, observers are scarcer than men of intellect, because the imagination alone constitutes a man of intellect, whilst genius, enlightened by knowledge, and guided by a sound, strong, and practised reason, is scarcely sufficient to form an observer . . . Pursue this gradation, and perhaps you will not find a single man qualified to be a legislator,—that is to say, to assemble and extend the applications of the natural law †.

“ Thus almost all writers upon, or rather restorers of our laws, have imagined much, but meditated very little. They have worked without striving in concert, because they had no first principle ; and they have contradicted each other, because they wrote without method. They have given a new solution to each new difficulty. The edifice, seated upon a moving sand-bank, has become less solid in proportion as it was raised higher, and law has contradicted law. We owe the greater part of our laws to those dark ages when

* Lettres de Cachet, p. 51.

† P. 52.

superstition, ignorance, and the rage for war were contending against each other to gain possession of the human mind. In vain was it attempted to give some uniformity to these shapeless compilations: there was a total absence of principle; and every work of this description must bear upon the most simple, self-evident, and invariable principles. It soon became easy to elude the greater part of an immense code, and to take advantage of the remainder. Thus was despotism served by multiplying the laws, ‘for there is,’ says Montaigne, ‘as much liberty and extent in the interpretation of laws as in their framing;’ so that amid so many interpretations an arbitrary one may be chosen; and every arbitrary wish may find a good reason or pretence in this immense labyrinth*.”

But our object is not to “sum up in detail every known legislation; our question here is despotism, a history of which we do not purpose to write, though such a work is perhaps the noblest that remains to be written, but one of immense extent and very difficult of execution†. Our sole object is to characterise this despotism, which is the most dreadful scourge that can afflict mankind, for it can attain perfection only by the destruction of humanity, which must struggle without intermission against misfortune and privations, whilst it constantly seeks for happiness, that is to say, liberty.

An emperor * wished that the Roman people had but one head, that he might strike it off at a single blow. This was the wish of a senseless barbarian ; but he sought only the perfection of despotism†.

It is then to the study, and not to the history of despotism that this work applies : “ for to pursue its progress and develope its manœuvres and tricks, is a very different thing from tracing its ravages and opposing its progress. Many historians could describe the reigns of a Nero and a Caligula ; but Tacitus alone could paint a Tiberius ‡.

It is therefore concerning the follies and crimes of despotism that information must be given.

“ To instruct Kings and their subjects is cutting down despotism by the feet§ : Kings, because it diminishes their power ; citizens, because despotism is an attempt upon the security of all, and their submission to it is merely the effect of ignorance, and of having forgotten their rights||.”

We have already stated that most social institutions exercise a domination or power of subjection.

Let us study its principle, “ for it is with reference to the origin of our country’s laws, to the degree of attachment we owe to them, and to the exertions we ought to make for their maintenance and defence, that we are oftenest mistaken, because we have not studied

* Caligula.

† P. 57.

‡ Page 56.

§ P. 59.

|| P. 59.

this duty, the most important of all. Most men disgrace their nature by passive obedience ; others likewise, unable to distinguish the circumstances under which obedience is due to government from those under which it is not due, and when honour itself directs that it shall be refused, confound, according to their own prejudices and impressions, but more especially to their personal interests, servitude with obedience, and firmness with rebellion *."

Let us therefore examine this domination.

Is it of "divine right," as so many base slaves, so many raving fanatics have written ? Certainly not. No one, in the present times, would venture to maintain such an absurdity, which has melted away before the first flashes of public reason, whose progress it is no longer possible to check.

If this domination is not of divine right, it is of human institution ; and in this case it has an object, and has been conferred upon conditions. Now, what are these conditions, and what is this object ?

"The people whom you command could have entrusted their power to you only for their own benefit, or, what is the same thing, for the maintenance of public safety, both internal and external, and for all the advantages of which they looked forward in creating a tutelary authority. They had the full enjoyment of

* Page 70 of the edition published in 1775.

their rights when they instituted you ; and you could have obtained nothing from them by compulsion, because, before they created for you the despotism of force, they were the strongest *. Men are bound to a government only in proportion as it approaches more or less near to the primitive object of its institution† ; for duties are, and can be, only proportionate to rights‡.

“ If the people have made you powerful, they have done so for their own greater good ; if they respect and obey you, it is also for their own greater good. Let us speak still more plainly : if they pay you, and that very dearly, too, because they hope you will bring them more than you cost, you are, in a word, their first stipendiary servant, and nothing more §. Let us add, that the nation pay this public officer, not to spare him trouble, but to make him take that of defending the mass of public wealth, and consequently all private property ||.”

Here, then, is a mandate.

Here, then, is a salary.

But what are the conditions ?

In good logic, “ he who pays has a right to dismiss him who is paid, if the former does not derive, from the voluntary stipend granted to the latter, the advan-

* Page 82 of the edition published in 1775.

† P. 64.

expected; that is to say, if the authority created—
 and the general property continually encroaches—
 this property, and thus commits the most dan—
 us of crimes against mankind, whose confidence—
 etrays, which renders the crime still more hatefu—
 l more deserving of punishment*.”

Human society has therefore always a legal right to—
 o itself justice. “Duty, interest, and honour, com—
 mand us to resist the arbitrary orders of the monarch—
 and when there are no other means left of preservin—
 our freedom, to force back from him the powe—
 his abuse of it is calculated to lead to the destruc—
 tion of that freedom†. A nation can always do
 itself this justice, because it always ultimately becomes
 stronger than the tyrant‡, and because there is no
 despot living who can hope to oppress with impunity
 twenty millions of men §.”

But, in admitting these severe and palpable truths—
 —in acknowledging that society has the right of
 missing its officer when he becomes faithless or
 prevaricator, we must now examine whether we
 have reached such a degree that the necessity of
 tisement is as real as the right resulting from
 original contract is incontestible and sacred.
 No doubt the people's delegates are guilty;

* Page 82 of the edition published in 1775.

† P. 102.

§ P. 273.

delity and prevarication, "because a wish to degrade others is inseparable from the desire to elevate oneself; because it is impossible that a man, whom a great interest cannot moderate, should not avail himself of his superiority; and because the passions combined produce tyranny and slavery*." No doubt kings have never ceased to conspire secretly against their subjects. "Every act of despotism is a battle in darkness†." No doubt all means are acceptable to their selfishness, their ambition, and their cupidity. It is, no doubt, with perverse intentions, and by perverting themselves, that they endeavour to dazzle men's eyes with pomp and grandeur. They have even dazzled their own eyes, and depraved their own hearts: "for if the ambition and success of conquerors, if the absolute power of despots can inspire beautiful odes, the forgetfulness of what is due to mankind has converted into ferocious beasts rulers who might otherwise have been estimable by their valour and their military talents‡."

One of the most disgraceful wrongs committed by governments is, that they have assiduously laboured for the corruption of morals. They have even employed

* Page 38 of the edition published in 1775.

† P. 60.

‡ P. 109. "What is the noblest and greatest genius if he does not respect the rights of mankind? Does the unfortunate animal, torn by a ferocious leopard, admire the mottled skin and various tricks of its foe? He who invented the harrow was more valuable to the world than he who restored the sceptre to Porus."—*Ibid.*

the fine arts in effecting this, by placing them in the service of a frantic and sacrilegious pride, and diverting them from their religious and philosophical destination*.

Thus the time comes at length for the party panting

* "Most of the governments that ought to protect, encourage, and watch over the arts, degrade them by turning them to base purposes. Far from directing them towards the beautiful, the useful and the praiseworthy, their influence is often used for corrupt objects. The fine arts, in a word, have always been the snares and allurements of despots. The sublime efforts of the human mind will hasten the progress of servitude, by accelerating that of luxury, the introduction of effeminacy, and the decline of good morals. In a word, the corruption produced by the arts is one of the fruits of despotism, and its sharpest weapon.

"Nor is this all. Despotism destroys the arts, after degrading them; for he whose heart is corrupt has seldom an elevated imagination. It was at the period of their return to freedom that the Athenians took so high a flight in every kind of glory. The arts then gave way under the blows of tyranny and fled from Greece, where they had taken such deep root and produced so many fruits and flowers. Their migration completed their corruption. They were welcomed to Rome by a despot, eager to gild the chains with which he was binding a whole people, who, till then, had placed all their glory in conquest and domination. Augustus was the friend of great artists; but he was also their corrupter. They disgraced themselves at his court by the basest flattery. The will of one individual laid down the law to men of genius, as to other citizens."—Pp. 42 and 45 of a pamphlet entitled "The Reader shall give the Title," written by Mirabeau, in 1777, in Holland, and which we shall notice presently. We shall no doubt create some surprise when we state that this little work treats only of Music, and our readers will assuredly think with us that nobody but Mirabeau could, on such a subject, have found occasion to inveigh against despotism.

to claim the fulfilment of the contract, and for the principal to punish his agent for the non-performance of his duties.

But these just reprisals lead to such profound political subversions, that nations generally are in no haste to make use of their rights, but, on the contrary, put up with despotism so long as it is pretty nearly bearable.

There is some danger, then, even in their own interest, in advising them to be patient no longer. But that they may not become impatient, and their sufferings be aggravated beyond measure, “kings must be spoken to; men must dare to instruct them and bring them to natural principles, whence it is very easy to wander, but to the evidence of which it is impossible not to yield when they are properly examined*.”

It is the more important to enlighten kings “because as they are never talked to except concerning themselves and their pleasures, they know very little of affinities; they have therefore but few ideas†, and a

* Page 63 of the edition published in 1775.

† P. 100. Elsewhere Mirabeau says:—“Kings who raise themselves only by things, and whom things instruct badly, because they almost always bend to the monarch's will, passions, and opinions, would perhaps appear the most stupid of human beings if it were known how little knowledge and how few ideas they generally have. Every rational saying that escapes them is preserved; which is,

mode of thinking and feeling different from that of other men ; which must be the case from their stupid and almost ferocious education *.

Besides, if princes were put "in a state to perceive the consequences of an arbitrary government—conse-

assuredly, the best possible proof that such sayings are not very numerous."—*Essay on Despotism*, p. 228.

* Page 103. "The nation, which ought to preside over this education, as having the greatest stake in it, not only does not select the tutors of its sovereigns, but almost always sees these tutors selected from the class of courtiers whom it despises, if it does not fear them. What hope can it have of a pupil entrusted to such hands?

"The nation should have reserved the exclusive right of directing the education of its rulers. Unfortunately they are delivered over to perverse tutors, who have been left near the throne, where every thing breathes vice and avarice."—*Lettres de Cachet*, p. 74.

We may here be allowed to observe, even in Mirabeau's interest, that we are offering only an analysis of a work of his youth. There is reason to believe that, at a later period of his life, he considered :— 1st. That if the governor was selected from among the courtiers, the tutor and sub-tutor should be taken without reference to their birth ; 2ndly, that such men, whether lords or plebeians, as Amyot, Péréfixe, La Mothe le Vayer, Montausier, Beauvilliers, Bossuet, Fenelon, and the two Fleury's, were neither flatterers nor corrupters ; 3rdly, that if the law had given the legislature a right to preside over the education of Princes, that is to say, to conduct their education as it thought proper, taking the princes from under the paternal authority, the peace of nations and the dignity and security of Kings would have gained in an equal degree ; 4thly, that the granting of this right would, *ipso facto*, have decided against all families the important question still debated, after a lapse of sixty years, whether the monopoly of education and teaching ought or ought not to be in the hands of the public authority, in order to secure the advantage of the community which it represents and governs.

quences not less dreadful to themselves than to their subjects—they would take good care not to become despots* ; for they would fear to diminish their power by extending their authority†. They would know that a King who grasps at the whole of the authority, loses it all‡. They would be just and moderate for their own sakes, for men are not oppressed without danger§. They would understand what inflexible truth thus tells them: ‘ If you overturn the social hierarchy of which you are the chief—if you show men their fetters—if their eyes are no longer fascinated—if their labour can no longer satisfy your cupidity—if you foolishly squander the wealth torn from them by your insatiable tyranny—what would they gain by continuing to crouch before you? They will call to mind that they are the most numerous and the strongest, and that you have no other power than that which they either give up to you, or procure for you||.’

“ ‘ O King! to whom nature has given more organs and faculties than to other men, your people and you cling to each other by the sole bond of usefulness which connects you all. If you break it, you endanger your existence, whether by the community taking from you the power from which it derives nothing but oppression and misfortune, instead of protection and

prosperity ; or whether by your success in enervating your subjects by servitude, and ruining their country by the ravages of despotism ; for your exaggerated power will undergo the fate of that country which being exhausted in men and resources, falls the moment any attempt is made to overthrow it, for it is defended by none but slaves *. The tyrant has always the weight of his iniquities suspended over his head and is more unhappy, in the midst of his grandeur than Damocles palpitating under the sword, since to the convulsions of terror the despot adds the torture of remorse, if any can exist in a heart accustomed to tyranny †.”

Let us therefore have the courage to enlighten kings. “ But where shall we find philosophers able to censure the great, and defend mankind ? The courage which braves the danger of arms is the most common of any, and yet it is the most valued. The courage of principles, of conduct, and of morals, much more rare and valuable. We dare not think differently from our fellows, when there is any danger in striving against the general opinion. We cannot even think differently from any other person, when our social institutions have imbued us with prejudices which the ambitious and our masters cultivate with great care. The spirit of imitation, adroitly excited

* Page 85 of the edition published in 1775.

† P. 67.

by them, becomes the universal feeling. Now, the spirit of imitation is, in every sense, the inverse of genius; it stifles in an equal degree knowledge and principle. Men's minds become enervated, their heads become weak, and their duties are perverted. Every thing follows the despot's impulse, and the torrent of servitude. Passive obedience becomes the fashion, as the love of freedom was the commonest virtue in happier times and under a less arbitrary government*.

Let us then dare to speak to Kings a language at once sincere and firm, respectful and bold; let us point out to them their true origin, their sole use; the nature, essence, and limits of their power; their abuse of it, or rather the abuse of it to which they are led; the error they commit in governing too much—in forgetting the primitive, stipulated, and fundamental conditions of their authority—in forgetting our rights and their own; and in mistaking their true dignity and real interests. Let us persuade them to limit their power, and give us institutions, not only for our advantage but for their own; for “being instituted to protect the laws, they must, in their turn, be protected by the laws, without which licentiousness and faction cause almost as many evils to society as tyranny does †.”

* * * * *

* Page 116 of the edition published in 1775.

† Page 116

During Mirabeau's detention at the castle of If, he took advantage of his proximity to his paternal residence, and had all the genealogical and other family documents brought to him in order to obtain material for the interesting narrative inserted at the beginning of the present work, and which contains a brief history of the house of Mirabeau, together with a life of the author's grandfather, the Marquis John Anthony, surnamed the "Silver Neck;" a noble and elevated personage, of whom it appears to us we have a right to say that he has not been better treated in history than he was by his King and his contemporaries; for, even up to the present time, no historian has ever even mentioned his name, which would be completely unknown but for some uninteresting and heavy notices inserted in the genealogical dictionaries.

Having transcribed the whole of Mirabeau's narrative, we have nothing to say of it here. We trust, however, that the reader agrees with us in considering it not only an act of justice to the memory of a man whose greatness of soul, virtue, gallantry, and public services had been forgotten, but likewise a production which, though written in Mirabeau's early youth, is in many respects worthy of the talents he afterwards displayed. It is a new and piquant picture of a race remarkable, through a succession of ages, for a peculiar character of fiery originality and haughty independence. It has the further advantage of giving a lively representation

of the writer himself, whom we there behold as he always was—full of power and eloquence, but incorrect and unequal. He there appears as a nobleman pretty full of the illusions of his order, and at the same time as the man of the people hating despotism ; as essentially monarchical, yet as a bold tribune ; as excited by a passion for useful reform, and enlightened at an early age by the loftiest and most remote political foreknowledge.

Mirabeau drew up, besides, at the castle of If, for the commandant, M. Dallègre, a tolerably long Case, of which we give no portion here because it relates merely to a private litigation of no importance. We merely mention it in order to point out as a singular fact that Mirabeau's pen was successively employed by the commanding officers of the three prisons in which he was confined : by M. Dallègre at the castle of If, by the Count of St. Mauris at the fortress of Joux, and by M. de Rougemont at the donjon of Vincennes.

During the first part of Mirabeau's detention at Joux, he drew up, on some municipal affairs of the town of Pontarlier, a Case having only a very confined local interest, and in which we find nothing that would interest our readers*.

At the same period, about the month of August

* This paper is alluded to in the "Second Case for Counsel's opinion for the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier,"

1775, Mirabeau was requested by the Count of S~~au~~. Mauris to write an account of the festivities which took place on the coronation of Louis XVI. We have already mentioned this work, which Mirabeau often alluded to afterwards*. We give the beginning of it, but in a note†.

A few months after this, Mirabeau drew up a Case for a street-porter of Pontarlier, Jeanret by

* Page 45, in a note of the same "Case for Counsel's opinion." See also "Original Letters from Vincennes," vol. ii. p. 330. This production is entitled. "Letter from M. * * to M. * *," Geneva, 14 pages 8vo.

† "The greatest of all events for a nation is certainly the inauguration of its King. Then it is that heaven consecrates our monarchs, and draws tighter in some measure the ties by which we are bound to them; then it is that the ministers of the Most High impress upon the sovereign the character of representative of the Divinity. Our destinies are undecided, our hearts in expectation, and our prayers poured forth to the supreme Judge of Kings to ask of him a chosen one from the treasure of his beneficence, not of his anger, and in the intentions of his mercy not of his justice.

"To the pomp displayed, on this day, by the nation and by the depository of its power and its rights, our holy religion has added the most august solemnity. It is at the foot of the altar, it is upon the altar itself that our Kings pronounce the oath to be the fathers of their people and the image of divine justice.

"This formidable and sacred oath inspires nations with a consolidating confidence. This no doubt is the cause of the rejoicings which take place at the crowning of our Kings; and the first offerings of the public joy, the homage of a premature gratitude, are a great encouragement to a King to make him try to deserve the goodwill and love of his people—a feeling always belonging to good sovereigns."—Pp. 3 and 4.

name, who is several times alluded to in the correspondence from Vincennes*. This same man, defended by the pen and aided by the purse of Mirabeau, was afterwards so ungrateful as to appear voluntarily and give evidence at the period of the informations which preceded the sentence of the 10th of May 1777. Jeanret's deposition was the strongest and most decisive against the two fugitives†. Copies of this Case must now be very scarce; for even fifty-four years ago, Mirabeau himself found great difficulty in obtaining one, which was incomplete‡.

As it appears unknown to the preceding biographers of Mirabeau, and especially to Peuchet, who would otherwise have transcribed the whole of it, according to his usual practice, we extract some passages, to give another instance of the boldness with which Mirabeau

* Vol. ii. p. 330; vol. iii. p. 29; vol. iv. pp. 223, 229.

† Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. iii. p. 29.

‡ Ibid. vol. iv. pp. 223, 229. He could in fact obtain only a mutilated copy, which Sophie completed by two manuscript pages. This we learn by the following passage in an unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated August 18th 1780.

"You are an odd fellow, Mr. Good-Angel, to send me, in the handwriting of the Marchioness, the two pages wanting to my copy of the statement for Jeanret. But where is her letter? Faith! you are playing a pretty game with us. Why do you not also send me the rag upon which she wipes her pen? You would perhaps call that also a word from her!" This paper was entitled, "Case for Counsel's opinion for Jean Baptiste Jeanret, against one Bricand, *employé* in the farms, &c., 20 pages, 12mo.

could speak out, even though under the operation of a *lettre de cachet*.

Jeanret, bearing a burthen, had been stopped and wounded by an *employé* in the farms of the public revenue*, although he made no resistance, nor expressed any intention of avoiding the necessary declarations and examinations, or the payment of the regular duty.

“A citizen cannot be arbitrarily arrested, if he is not a malefactor; and even should he be so, either the laws, or the officers of police appointed by the sovereign, must have judged that he is, before he can be deprived of freedom. If these truths are incontestible, the unfortunate Jeanret has now just grounds for claiming the rights of a man and a citizen †.

* * * * *

“Where are we? Are there no laws, no courts of justice? And what are those men who, at once judges and executioners, decide in their own cause, pronounce judgment, execute it, convert the sabre of a custom-house officer into the sword of justice, and avenge with steel, offences of which they are the only witnesses,

* It appears that Jeanret afterwards became the companion of his adversaries. “Jeanret, formerly a smuggler, afterwards an *employé* in the farms, at present a police lackey, and consequently devoted at all times to those noble callings.”—*Second Case for Counsel's opinion for the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monsiér*, p. 98. 12mo edition.

† P. 1.

sometimes the inventors, and always the denunciators believed upon their simple word*.

* * * * *

“This defence is simple; all other principles than those upon which it is founded, would be a cruel attack upon the most sacred rights of man, upon his freedom, his safety and his life. Surely it cannot be in France that sabre-law is to be established†!

* * * * *

* * * * *

“No doubt a too long impunity has emboldened these men, whose insolence is the least of their offences, whose barbarity is the first of their good qualities, and who often date their fortune from the period of their first crime Magistrates! this is no empty declamation—yield to the horror inspired by what I state

* P. 2.

† At a subsequent period, Mirabeau wrote—

“There are states in which the mode of collecting taxes necessitates the most atrocious exactions, and places society in a true state of war. There, the people are oppressed by the farmers of the revenue, who are more destructive and more rapacious than Turkish Pashas; there, those insatiable publicans, take cognisance, to the exclusion of the Courts of Justice, of all the crimes they have invented, punishing them according to laws of their own dictation—thus becoming legislators, or, what is the same thing, despots of the despot, judges and parties in the same cause, and disposing, through their hired servants, of the liberties and lives of citizens, who have violated no other laws than those of these men’s framing.”—*Lettres de Cachet*, vol. i. p. 88.

Even the brother of the wretched man who solicits your justice—even the brother of Jeanret, whilst he was an *employé* in the farms of the revenue, killed two men. On committing the first murder he was promoted to the rank of brigadier; the second procured for him an office with a salary of 700 francs a year, and a gratification of a hundred louis. In vain did the first tribunal in the province make the most vigorous, persevering and truly praiseworthy exertions to bring him to punishment,—his crime was too useful for impunity not to be secured to him. Thus, when Jeanret himself was smitten, the comrades of his assailant exclaimed—‘he will be made a brigadier *!’”

* * * * *

* * * *

“‘But Jeanret raised his stick against the *employé*!’ No doubt he did, and had he not done so, he would have lost his life, and the *employé* been promoted. What!—you advance upon me with an uplifted sword, and I am to offer my body without defence, to your rage! Nowhere but in Turkey does the base slave kiss the bow-string sent to him by a baser tyrant . . . ‘But Jeanret ought to have obeyed!’ Whom? The regulation says nothing on this head. Is an *employé* of the revenue farnis a legislator? When I do no ill—when I do not disobey the

sovereign,—that is to say, the LIVING LAW, no human being has a right to dictate to me*.”

This is very strong language, no doubt, from a prisoner ; but Mirabeau spoke with still greater energy in a subsequent production, in which firmness of principle, censure of the acts of the public authorities, and a hatred of monopoly, are the more striking, because the work was undertaken at the request of one of the public authorities.

Soon after Mirabeau was conveyed to the fortress of Joux, he drew up, at the request of the commandant, the Count of St. Mauris, and after much laborious research and study, a paper upon the salt-pans in Franche-Comté. This work is frequently alluded to in the Letters from Vincennes. The original manuscript is in our possession ; as the subject however bears but little interest at the present day, when the institutions, or rather the abuses it describes, have been superseded by a totally different system, any extracts from it would be out of place. There is, however, one chapter which deserves mention, because in it Mirabeau lays down, for the first time, those principles of political economy which he professed with reference to matters of finance, prior to and during the existence of the National Assembly ; and because he there opposes with powerful energy that ill-judged, harsh, and

* P. 13.

The last of Mirabeau's works, prior to his departure for Holland, was never finished. Having found the library of the fortress of Joux some old histories of Franche-Comté and Savoy, and being constituted by a love of labour as well as by the extreme poverty in which he was left by his father, he began at Pontarlier of writing an extensive history of the province, as afterwards in Holland he projected one of the Low Countries, and subsequently of the Gatinois, because Sophie in her letters had sometimes mentioned certain chronicles written in the Latin of the middle ages, partly in the Vulgar Romana, and even, at his request, had copied these chronicles, which copies are now before us. The history of Franche-Comté was to have been preceded by an essay on historical study and composition.

As we have already stated, Mirabeau's first

his arrival at Amsterdam, was a pamphlet entitled "Advice to the Hessians," printed at Cleves in the beginning of 1777 *, and forming a sheet and a quarter octavo. Frederick II., Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, had agreed to supply England with six thousand Hessian soldiers, who were to be conveyed to America to fight against the "Insurgents." This disgraceful contract roused a philanthropic indignation in the mind of Mirabeau, already excited by a love of freedom and hatred of despotism.

"Brave Germans!" he wrote, "what disgrace are you allowing to be branded upon your generous brows! At the end of the eighteenth century, shall the nations of the centre of Europe become the mercenary satellites of odious despotism? Shall those valiant Germans who so vehemently defended their freedom against the conquerors of the world, and braved the Roman armies, be basely sold, and shed their blood to support the cause of tyrants? * * * * *

* * * * *

* "Advice to the Hessians and other nations of Germany, sold by their Sovereigns to England." Amsterdam, 1777, 8vo, 12 pages, with the following epigraph:—

"Quis furor iste novus? Quo nunc, quo tenditis?
Heu! miseri cives! non hostem, inimicaque castra;
Vestras spes uritis." VIRG.

This pamphlet, as Mirabeau states, was translated into five languages, and republished twice: first, among the pieces which com-

“Ye are sold!—and wherefore, Great God!—~~T~~
 attack a people defending the most just of causes, and
 who are setting you the noblest example. Why ~~d~~
 you not imitate that brave people, instead of attempting
 to destroy them?

* * * * *

Do you know the nation you are about to attack
 Do you know what power is derived from the fanaticism
 of freedom? It is the only fanaticism that is ~~not~~
 hateful, the only one respectable; but likewise it is ~~the~~
 most powerful of all.

* * * * *

Profit by their example; think of your honour—think
 of your rights. . . . Have you not equal rights with
 your chiefs? No doubt you have, but you are *not*
 sufficiently informed of this. Men pass before sove-
 reigns, who, for the most part, are unworthy of the
 name. Leave to infamous courtiers, and impious blas-
 phemers, the task of crying up the royal prerogative,
 and its unlimited rights; and do not you forget that
all were not made for *one*; that there is an authority
 superior to all authorities; that he who commands a
 crime ought not to be obeyed, and that therefore your
 conscience is the first of your rulers *.”

pose the “Espion Dévalisé;” secondly, in the third edition of
 “Essay on Despotism.”

* the Marquis of Mirabeau wrote, on the

This address, written in a somewhat declamatory, but powerful style, produced an extraordinary effect. An adherent of the Elector wrote a reply, entitled "Counsels of Reason." We have not seen this reply ; but in such a case it could not have proved effective unless very striking both in style and in talent, which however Mirabeau declares it was not. He published a smart rejoinder, entitled " Reply to the ' Counsels of Reason,'" from which we transcribe the following :—

" When public authority becomes arbitrary and oppressive—when it attacks private property, for the protection of which it was instituted—when it violates the contract which conferred its powers and limited them, resistance is a duty, and cannot be termed revolt. If this is not true, the Batavians are so many criminal insurgents. He who endeavours to recover his freedom and fights for it, exercises a most lawful right ;

had carried to such a length his undertaking to seduce and excite to mutiny the troops then embarking in that country for America, that the Landgrave of Hesse was obliged to conduct his soldiers in person to the port whence they were to sail.—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated March 14th, 1784.*

"Latria is as instinctive to man, as domesticity is to the dog. But no nation professes so strong an adoration for its princes as the people of Germany, though these princes are mostly fools. The Landgrave of Hesse, having sold his troops to England, was obliged to go in person and put them on board ship. These giants of men, almost at every departure, rose against their officers ; but the moment the little monkey appeared, they all fell prostrate in line of battle."—*Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 24th, 1786.*

and revolt, which is an unlawful act, is essentially different from a confederacy allowed by the constitution of free nations, and more particularly by natural law which is the universal code whence all laws ought to be derived. * * * * *

Treason against the nation is the greatest of crimes and a people is as superior to its sovereign, as a sovereign is superior to any single individual."

Mirabeau was likewise concerned at Amsterdam in the Dutch edition of the "History of Voyages and Travels*." He also translated the first volume of Gesner's works†, the first volume of Mrs. Macauley's‡ History of England, and a portion of the "History of Philip II., King of Spain," by Robert Watson. Lastly, he published the pamphlet, "The Reader shall give the Title§." This work treats of music, then not much cultivated in Holland. He examines whether this art is so frivolous as many people believe||; whether it is possible to compose good instrumental music without attempting to describe some particular object¶; whether the passions cannot be expressed by music** ; what connexion there is between the poet's art and that of the musician. This clever little work,

* Letters from Vincennes, vol. ii. p. 310.

† Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated February 5th 1781.

‡ Catherine Sawbridge, Macauley Graham.

§ London, 1777, 8vo. 96 pages.

|| P. 18.

¶ P. 62.

** P. 61.

which is very entertaining, is by no means unworthy of Mirabeau's reputation. We have evidence that he himself set some value upon it*. Its style is very different from that of Mirabeau's other works, and bears some resemblance to the writings published in the following years by several literary men engaged in the controversy betwixt the admirers of Gluck and those of Piccini†.

Having sought refuge in Holland to avoid the consequences of a serious offence, the original cause of which was paternal persecution, it was natural that Mirabeau should there seek to defend, if not to justify, himself. A letter dated as from London, Dec. 15th 1776, and addressed, with reference to the "Essay on Despotism," to the authors of the "Gazette Littéraire," was published by them. This letter contains a judi-

* "In this little pamphlet there are some ideas concerning music which are not common, and I have contrived to introduce, into the simple apology of an artist, matters which prove that I was above my subject I must tell you with a simple candour at which you will perhaps laugh, that I consider above mediocrity the page containing my quotation of the article "Genius," from Rousseau's Dictionary of Music, in which there are sublime things, and which, generally speaking, is a very good work, though it might have been better. There is another paragraph, short and profound: that in which I prove that instrumental music is truly that part of the art which does and ought to paint."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Lafage, dated December 5th 1780, and written from the donjon of Vincennes.*

† Mirabeau alludes to this work, in the "Correspondence from Vincennes," vol. ii. p. 419; vol. iii. p. 61; vol. iv. p. 336, &c.

cious and interesting justification, and the very exact particulars which it gives have led to the supposition that it was written by Mirabeau. It contains an abridged history of his youth, his education, the hardships he endured, his campaigns and labours in Corsica, his return to Paris, his contempt for the "quackery of economics," the indignation inspired by the despotism of the last years of Louis XV, the violence of Maupeou, and the frauds of Terray. It mentions his residence in Provence, but not his marriage; it speaks of his debts, the persecutions he suffered, and his quarrel with Villeneuve Moans, but does not allude to the affair at Pontarlier and his flight to Holland.

Less offensive than most of the animadversions in the Vincennes correspondence, this letter contains, nevertheless, some very bitter remarks upon the conduct of the Marquis of Mirabeau, as a husband and a father, and exposes his silly weakness as an author and the chief of a sect. We wish we had evidence to refute the grounds upon which this production is attributed to Mirabeau's pen. It also bears the signature S. M., being the initials of Saint Matthew, a name which he had assumed in Holland. But we must candidly admit that we share the general opinion in regard to this imputed authorship. We shall, however, insert no extracts from the letter, because we have already stated, in much greater detail, the facts which it contains.

This letter is the only personal defence which Mirabeau ever voluntarily published against his father. Many other attacks were imputed to him; and the belief in such an imputation excited most powerfully the wrath of the Marquis and the Bailli.

But Mirabeau did not cease to strive against this injustice, which we have ourselves shown to be such, and he alludes to it at every opportunity*. He confesses, and in terms of repentance and sorrow†, a participation in a single case drawn up in the name and on

* Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. p. 70; vol. ii. p. 414; vol. iii. pp. 236, 353, 354, 400, 410, 481; vol. iv. p. 310, &c.

† "With regard to the case published in favour of my mother, and to the 'Anecdote to be added to the voluminous Collection of Philosophical Hypocrisies,' [another title to the letter by S.M.] which Dupont did not know, and which I have confessed to him, I found it shorter and more honourable to pass condemnation upon myself. Not but I might have cavilled, convinced as I am that, with reference to myself, my father has exceeded the rights of any one man over another, and consequently those of a father over his son, and has thus snapped asunder the chain of my duty towards him;—convinced as I am, also, that the principles of order and justice, upon which the law is founded, render it incumbent upon the oppressed to employ them against his oppressor; and that, in our enslaved countries, personal influence cannot be arrested in its iniquitous and crooked progress, except by raising up public opinion against it. I have perhaps been induced to write against my father, without having so much upon my conscience as would be produced by such an act under any other circumstances. Nevertheless, I confess that it was deeply repugnant to my feelings. I have repented of it—I do so still; and if my cursed facility in writing, and the pressing instances of my poor mother had not hastened this production, it would never have been written. I yielded, therefore, in

behalf of his mother in 1777 *, and which is certainly moderate in comparison with those which she after-

this case, though my recrimination has been but feeble."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated May 12th 1779.*

The original of this letter, in Mirabeau's own handwriting, is now before us, and yet, among others, we find the above passage transcribed, word for word, in page 235, vol. iii. of the Vincennes correspondence, in a letter addressed to Sophie, dated May 5th 1779. The remainder of the same letter occupies from page 235 to page 245 inclusive. It may be thought that, on this occasion, Mirabeau copied from himself,—a very common practice of his; but on reflection, this supposition must be rejected; for it is impossible to imagine that the prisoner writing to his mistress, who was also a prisoner, should literally repeat a passage written four days previously to Boucher, who read all the letters sent to Sophie. The true explanation of this singularity is the fact, that Manuel, whenever the letters to Sophie left a blank, filled it up by applying to Sophie those letters which Mirabeau had written to his friends, and among others to Boucher, who left at the police office all those addressed to himself. We shall give further evidence of this fact.

* This case, signed "LACROIX-FRAINVILLE, Advocate," fills 58 pages—34 of text and 24 of notes. Paris: P. G. Simon, 1777.

The testimony of Mirabeau himself (and when he writes to Sophie no suspicion can be attached to his evidence) proves that he had but little to do with this composition.

"This copy of my *Case* is a piece of ridiculous folly. Are you not aware that one-half of it is not mine?—that the remainder was published without my knowledge, and without correction?—and that the part done by me consists only of letters written in haste? Who the devil gave you these shapeless fragments?"—*Original Letters from Vincennes*, vol. ii. p. 414.

To this case was added "Counsel's Opinion for the Count of Mirabeau, under interdict, against the Marquis of Mirabeau, his father," written by an advocate named Groubert de Groubental, and containing the letters which Mirabeau, during his concealment, had

wards published during her lawsuit. These latter Cases are seven in number, and form a very thick quarto volume. We must add, that Mirabeau's sketch was even very much modified, as is proved by the following passages from two letters, one from the Marquis, the other from the Bailli of Mirabeau.

"The reporter * of my lawsuit," wrote the former, "spoke to me about this Case, and the source whence it sprang, assuring me that it was in the hands of a very prudent man; instead of which, this young advocate, in order to take the credit of the style due to the rascal in Holland, has adopted a Case which the latter sent, has made it the groundwork of his own, and has embroidered and double-embroidered it †."

"Your son," wrote the Bailli, "has proved to me by letters bearing the postmarks of Paris and Holland, that he wrote only at his mother's request, and that he did not write one half of what we were told was his †."

written to Malesherbes. This was Mirabeau's real offence; and though in our third volume we have shown that which might have extenuated it, even in the eyes of the Marquis of Mirabeau, still we do not pretend to excuse such a fault; but, in proportion as we are sincere in condemning it, we are bound to oppose all exaggeration.

* M. de Malezieu.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated April 3rd 1777.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 16th 1782. A statement in justification of him-

The publication of the letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, has made known the immensity of Mirabeau's studies and labours during his captivity of forty-two months. Many have been lost, others remained unfinished. Among the lost or incomplete, we may mention a translation of Horace*, one of Ovid†, one of Catullus and Propertius‡, one of Tasso's Aminta§, a treatise on Mythology||, a general grammar¶, an

self has also been attributed to Mirabeau, who is said to have written it in 1775, at the period when, as we have already shown, he was demanding redress against the interdict, and the pretence upon which he had been thrown into prison, claiming to be sent for trial before judges independent of his adverse party the Baron of Villeneuve Moans. During the prosecution of the suit at Aix, Mirabeau was accused of having inserted, in this Case, letters in which his wife was mentioned to M. de Malesherbes in a very unfavourable manner; but, exclusively of the explanations we have before given, we have evidence proving that, even supposing Mirabeau drew up the case, he had nothing to do with its publication.

"They (the Marchioness of Mirabeau and Madame de Cabris) have published without his sanction this Case, which gives him the *coup de grace*, and is nothing more than a Case for counsel's opinion, with three rigmaroles attached to it, which he successively wrote to M. de Malesherbes at the period of the fine debate which you witnessed."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated October 28th 1776.*

* Letters from Vincennes, vol. ii. pp. 108, 245.

† Ibid. Vol. ii. pp. 418, 419; vol. iii. pp. 33, 81, 123.

‡ Ibid. Vol. ii. p. 107.

§ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated August 2nd 1781.

|| Letters from Vincennes, vol. ii. p. 373; vol. iii. pp. 122, 126.

¶ Ibid. vol. iii. p. 122.

ay on literature *, a drama †, a tragedy ‡, a collection of prose elegies §, dissertations on the use of ular troops ||, on the Obedience due to Governments ¶, and on Religious Houses **. We have hing to state concerning these productions, not a gment of which has reached us.

The other works written wholly or in part by Mirau during his captivity, and which have since been lished at different periods, are—translations of ullus ††, Boccaccio ‡‡, and Johannes Secundus §§, a ection of Tales ||, the “Lettres de Cachet and State

Letters from Vincennes, vol. iii. pp. 81, 122, 149, 248.

Ibid. Vol. iii. pp. 161, 274.

Ibid. Vol. ii. p. 108.

Ibid. Vol. iv. pp. 166, 169, 354.

Ibid. Vol. i. Preliminary discourse, p. 37.

[Ibid.

* Ibid.

† Ibid. Vol. ii. pp. 108, 245, 415; vol. iii. p. 555; vol. iv. pp. 168, 179, 188, 193, 204, 304, 328. Vitry, pp. 2, 7, 8, 14, 23, 49, &c.

‡ Ibid. Vol. iv. pp. 165, 179, 242, 256, 266, 275, 287, &c.

§ Ibid. Vol. ii. pp. 108, 327, 340, 342, 372; vol. iv. pp. 165, 247, 266, &c.

|| Ibid. Vol. ii. p. 342; vol. iv. p. 61, 75, 92, 104, 126, 140, 165, &c. Mirabeau finished this collection in December 1779. ough the work contains nothing immoral, it is nevertheless unrthy of the author. His extreme poverty forced him to write se tales.

“These pieces are, I admit, very frivolous; but you may point it to the publisher that besides being tolerably well written, they ppose a knowledge of five different languages. Consequently, if

Prisons *,' the "Espion Dévalisé †," the "Errótica Biblion," and the "Conversion."

he has any plan of a work that I could undertake, he will take confidence in us. This will please me much, will occupy me, and will help Sophie and my daughter."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated December 18th 1779.* "Crush me with work if you can. I ask it in the name of my daughter."—*Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated January 26th 1780.*

A short time before Mirabeau quitted the Donjon of Vincennes, he again made the same request, in a letter which we have already mentioned.

"I entreat you, my dear angel, not to neglect my views upon your bookseller, because you think we are at the end—of my captivity, true—but not of my poverty. I expect that my father will display the extreme of parsimony. Now Sophie is in want, and in debt; where shall we find wherewith to meet these things, unless I work?"—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated September 28th 1780.*

A month before his release, he returned to the charge.

"Let us think of providing for the future before distress is felt. Let your bookseller place immediately in my hands the 'Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions.' Every month I will supply a volume, according to the plan I have stated and written to him; and I assure you that it will be a valuable work, the editions of which may be multiplied as much as he pleases. This is one of those undertakings which every body cannot execute, but which every body may conceive. For this reason, we must not allow ourselves to be forestalled. The title might be: 'Miscellany of literature,' or 'Choice selections of the most interesting articles for all classes of readers, taken from the Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres.' Surely this would be a gold mine to a publisher."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated November 3rd 1780.*

* Letters from Vincennes, vol. ii. p. 222; vol. iv. pp. 203, 204, 320, 323. Vitry, pp. 37, 57, 76, 117, 119, 125, 281, &c.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Vitry, p. 280 of Vitry's collection.

We shall not allude to the two last, except to deplore the cause which produced them, and which we must look for in the deep pecuniary distress to which Mirabeau was reduced in the Donjon of Vincennes with a pension of only 600 francs * a year, in want of actual necessities, as was likewise Sophie at her convent. We shall only add that these disgraceful productions did not leave Mirabeau's hand in the state in which they now appear to the very small number of persons who read them. They have been falsified by covetous publishers, who have made the most disgusting additions, as is proved by many fragments which we possess of the latter work, and by the entire autograph manuscript of the former; and that by the supposition of the "Good Angel" having taken charge of these manuscripts, a most unjust imputation has been cast upon the prudent and virtuous Bouchert†. The proof of this has already been published ‡. It is well known, besides, that neither of these works was published till long after Boucher's death; and it is not difficult to believe that publishers induced, by a hope of gain, to disgrace themselves by so base a speculation, would have lost no time in publishing.

* £ 24 sterling.

† Peuchet among others has accused Boucher of this, vol. i. p. 316; and also the writer of an article in the "*Révue de Paris*," of March 1831, vol. xxiv. No. 3, p. 157.

‡ See Vitry's collection, pp. 23, 123.

The translation of Tibullus has been claimed by Poisson de la Chabeaussière, son of Mirabeau's tutor*. To disprove this pretension, it is only necessary to refer, in the letters from Vincennes †, and in those published by Vitry‡, to the different accounts which Mirabeau gives of this laborious work. We have in our possession the manuscript in the handwriting of young Lavisé, whom we have already mentioned as Mirabeau's secretary in prison. This manuscript is surcharged with notes, corrections, and additions, in the handwriting of Mirabeau. We have likewise, in the unpublished letters, and, among others, in more than a hundred written to Boucher, abundant proof that Mirabeau was executing this translation as a work of long and painful labour, and not one of rapid and

* In a letter, dated June 28th 1796, addressed to the editors of the "*Décade Philosophique*," several writers have mentioned this singular claim without contradicting or even understanding it. For instance, Cadet Gassicourt, page 43 of the first edition of his work, and page 38 of the second edition, terms La Chabeaussière a *littérateur* BETTER SKILLED IN THE ART OF WRITING VERSES. Did he not know, or had he forgotten, that this translation is written in prose?

† Vol. ii. pp. 107, 245, 415; vol. iii. p. 555; vol. iv. pp. 165, 168, 179, 188, 193, 204, 328, 504, &c. &c.

‡ Pp. 2, 7, 8, 14, 23, 38, 49, &c. In page 8, is the following sentence, which Mirabeau seems to have written as if on purpose to destroy by anticipation, fifteen years beforehand, the supposition which we are opposing:—

"Take notice, that all you may find in the handwriting of M. de la Chabeaussière was written under my dictation."

easy revision. This, and the "Lettres de Cachet," constituted his principal occupation at Vincennes *.

It is therefore certain that Mirabeau was the real translator of Tibullus, and that La Chabeaussière had no share in the translation. It is merely for the sake of truth that we insist upon this point, as we do not think that this work has at all added to Mirabeau's

* When first Mirabeau undertook to translate Tibullus he thought only of making a present to his mistress. "My intention was to have it bound in blue morocco leather, lined with white satin, and lettered on the back—*SOPHIE'S HOURS*. See whether such a thing would exceed our finances. A small gold heart must be fastened to the little tassel of hair."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated August 10th 1779*. These are the "*Sophie's Hours*," alluded to in the correspondence from Vincennes, vol. iii. pp. 443, 470, 495, 527, 534, 555, 557; and the tassel of hair attached to this manuscript is the subject of the jokes in pages 225 and 226 of the same volume. It is probable that the edition published in 1798 was printed from these "*Hours*;" that is to say, from Mirabeau's own manuscript—an edition which, on being compared with our manuscript in Lavisé's handwriting, and surcharged with Mirabeau's autograph notes, offers many omissions and imperfections, which Mirabeau, by dint of labour, afterwards remedied. With reference to this manuscript, we here give an extract, which proves that the police, though so favourably disposed to the prisoner, was at times very particular.

"Lavisé, the son, has just told me from you that I must erase from his copy of Tibullus all that is in my handwriting. Why, my dear trembler, it would be a great chance indeed that my hand were recognised by some one of the censors, when I have never sent anything to them, and for a reason well enough known. No one could therefore guess that I did the Tibullus. Besides, it would not suit me to put my name to so frivolous a work."—*Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated July 17th 1780*.

fame, the real lustre of which lies in his public life. His celebrity as a philosopher, an orator, and a statesman, is so dazzling, that it would throw into the shade scientific and literary merit much greater than any he displayed.

This translation of Tibullus, though perhaps the best extant, has been considered but a very mediocre work. Far from finding fault with this judgment, we think it could scarcely have been different. In the first place, every translation from verse into prose is more or less a falsehood; the most eloquent prose writer is, to the fact he translates, as a weak draughtsman is to a powerful painter, and the translation is to the original what a cold and dull drawing is to a warm and brilliant picture.

But it seems to us that another reason still more decisive, which prevents this work from rising above mediocrity, is, that circumstances forced the translator to undertake a thing for which he was neither qualified nor prepared.

Had Mirabeau been a poet, and one of superior order, like Tibullus, endowed with the same temper and disposition, animated with the same feelings and placed in the same situation, he still would have been badly prepared for his attempt; he would have had to overcome the disadvantages arising from the language in which he wrote—a language which, notwithstanding the merit that really belongs to it, and the immense

popularity given to it by some immortal poets, and great original writers (not translators), is evidently inferior, as a vehicle of poetry, to the Latin which has so much precision and energy, so much boldness and rapidity, so much picturesque and inexhaustible variety, and the peculiar form, and turns of which, its happy combinations and its harmonious periods, cannot be given in our modern idioms, formed for different habits, different organs, and perhaps different senses.

But was Mirabeau a poet? Certainly not; for he did not practise poetry; neither had he any great liking nor esteem for it. In the ancient and modern languages, in which he was well versed, he had but slightly read the epic and dramatic poets, and works of imagination and taste. But moralists, philosophers, historians, jurists, economists, and writers on public law, had constituted, almost exclusively, his favourite studies, in the pursuit of which he was assiduous and indefatigable. Mirabeau had devoted his whole life to matters bearing upon politics, and works of literature were to him nothing more than a passing recreation, or relaxation from severer pursuits.

On the other hand, had he any mental affinity with the poet he was translating? Those of our readers who are acquainted with both have already answered this question: they know that Tibullus, whose happily constituted nature seems to have owed nothing to study or to art—who allowed his heart to speak without ever

MEMOIRS OF MIRABEAU.

ing his mind—who, unknown to himself, has so
ease, grace, and poetry—was a man of sickly
constitution, weak, timid, enervated, dreamy, and
ancholy. Was Mirabeau the same?—could such
his physical temperament, when his mind was so
sensitive, and at the same time so ardent and so am-
bitious; with vigour exuberant even to overflowing;
with audacity even to recklessness; with energy even
to exaggeration? Could his intractable and unbend-
ing nature assume the servile flexibility indispensable
to a translator? Certainly not; the infinite lay betwixt
the two natures of the original poet and his imitator.
Their respective feelings and situations were not mor-
ally alike: the one yielded to all the weakness of a tender
heart, the other gave way to all the impetuosity of a
fiery temperament. The first was gently moved by
the milder affections, the second was a prey to the
wildest passions. That one was rocked by the happiest
illusions, this one was borne upon by the severest
fictions. Tibullus was saturated with a life of volup-
tuousness, Mirabeau was dragged from prison to prison.
The only shade common to men so dissimilar, was their
mutual hatred of flattery (of which poets are generally
considered fond), and their spirit of independence;
for, like Mirabeau, Tibullus flattered nothing but
friendship; and whilst Virgil and Horace offered their
incense to Augustus and Mæcenas, Tibullus, notwith-
standing the example they set him, and the earn-

entreaties no doubt made to him, refused even to mention by name any of the great men of the day—for if he alluded to Messala it was only as a private friend. Mirabeau, also, never addressed the powers contemporary with him, except to offer them advice, or accuse and threaten them in the name of the public interest.

It is therefore not surprising that this translation of Tibullus is at best but an imperfect copy of the original. Besides the natural unfitness of the translator, and the insufficiency of the idiom he used, the precipitation and weariness inspired by this labour of necessity and not of inspiration, are but too evident. It cannot be said that the translation is unfaithful ; but, with some few exceptions, the dry sense is given without the mind, the effect, the motion, and the colouring of Tibullus. The work is not faulty ; but it is diffuse, unconnected, and without fervour. A multitude of shades are wanting in it, and the loss of these is by no means compensated by the tints which the translator has taken from his own palette. In one word, this translation is a very ordinary work, except in the notes, which, like the “ Essay on Despotism” and the “ Lettres de Cachet,” prove that Mirabeau, while in prison, employed his time in the most arduous and patient investigations of a branch of knowledge difficult to acquire. And as even in the notes on Tibullus there is nothing which others have not done equally well, if not better, in the same kind of labour, we are of opinion

that this translation would never have outlived Mirabeau had he not acquired other claims to the attention of posterity.

Having said thus much, we dismiss the translation of Tibullus without further notice. Neither shall we say any thing of that of "the Basia" of Johannes Secundus*, which, though it doubtless displays grace and elegance, is nothing but a paraphrase conveying no correct idea of the original.

We shall but very slightly allude to the collection presented as a translation of Boccaccio †, but which, as the author himself confesses in his introduction, is nothing more than simple sketches of some of the tales in the "Decameron," a work in which we must admire the imagination, and more especially the style, of a writer who created his own language, but which we must admit to be shapeless, crude, and intolerable to modern readers. Mirabeau imitated some of the licentious tales which alone are known to the general reader, but took no notice of the other articles which abound in the Decameron, because they neither suited his views nor the public taste.

We shall mention only by name his "Collection of Tales," which, like the above translations, was written

* Mirabeau speaks of it in the letters from Vincennes, vol. ii pp. 106, 327, 340.

† Ibid. Vol. iv. pp. 165, 247, 256, 266, 275, 287, &c.

to order, and Mirabeau was obliged to undertake them on account of the excessive poverty which increased his sufferings in confinement.

We must dwell a little longer upon the "Lettres de Cachet and State Prisons," a composition which occupied Mirabeau a great deal, as may be seen by his letters. He set some value upon this work, "which," he says, "will not die*." Strong in the noble and patriotic feeling which induced him to undertake it, and certain of being understood by the two good men upon whom his fate at Vincennes depended, he feared not to communicate his work to them.

"I have a manuscript," he wrote to Boucher, "which, setting aside all false modesty, I think valuable and quite new. It is in a very bad place here, and I wish it to be in your hands. But, will you return it to me, even if it should treat of *lettres de cachet* and state prisons? Find means to let me know this, and whether I may forward it to you †. I send you the Black Book without reading it again; but remember that I entrust it to M. Boucher, and not to the man in office; that you have promised to return it to me the moment I regain my freedom; and that, if my captivity lasts, you will do me the pleasure to send it back to me a few months hence, in order that I may add proofs and

* Letters from Vincennes, vol. iii. p. 63.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated March 11th 1779.

explanations of which you only yet see the summary, and which will be a collection of texts. This is what I have to say : the first part is, I believe, a good work ; it cost me a whole year of labour, and I would not lose this manuscript, which contains views, ideas, and things. The second part has not a word of exaggeration, and will shew you whether or not I am as ill-informed upon the subject as you suppose. My dear angel, your looks, your words, and your very features breathe honesty. Look then into this work. Many horrible things occur which you might prevent with a single word *. My only object in writing is to be useful †. Ureflect upon the part that concerns yourself, with reference to your office, and believe the word of a man of honour who

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated March 27th 1779.

† “ If the superiors have no wish to know the truth, or if they fear it, this writing will not be of much use, because I plead against them before their own tribunal ; and assuredly they are better informed than I, regarding their own intentions. Nevertheless, what can they offer in objection, or in reply, to a man absolutely disinterested, since he will be no longer under the sway of him (M. de Rougemont) whose tyranny he denounces to them by divulging his base barbarity ? Not to repress such barbarity when known, is to authorise it. Be that, however, as it may, I entertain a hope at least of opening the eyes of some relatives more prejudiced than inhuman. If I moved them regarding the fate of those unhappy men whose misfortunes I have long shared, the remembrance of it would be less bitter. If I contributed any thing towards obtaining their freedom, were it only the release of one among them, I should look with calmness upon the risks I might run by propagating these bold truths.”—*Lettres de Cuchet*, vol. ii. p. 79.

attests to you the truth, and swears, at his last moment *, that he has not exaggerated, nor even divulged the whole of it. Although the first part of this book is too much below the noble subject, and even my own ideas, yet it contains what nobody else will dare to say, or can say †. Confess then that you find nothing in my manuscript that would not please an honest man, nothing that is not in keeping with the tone, the feelings, and the duties of a good citizen. If you held the censorship, would you hesitate to sanction its publication? But I ask not this of you And yet were I to ask it of you, and it were necessary, I should obtain your sanction ‡. Shall I not therefore get a word from you, with your stoical or your diplomatic prudence, concerning my Black Book? At all events, return me the manuscript, even if you say not a word about it, for the book is good and I will not be separated from it §.

Mirabeau was not less candid with his father on the same subject.

* When Mirabeau wrote this, he believed that he was about to die.

† Letters from Vincennes, vol. iv. p. 323.

‡ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated April 7th, 1780.

§ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 7th 1780. The only word which Mirabeau obtained from Boucher's prudence was the following :—

"I return you your 'Lettres de Cachet.' I have not read the manuscript. I know not what may be said of it; but it cannot pass through my hands."—*Unpublished letter from Boucher to Mirabeau,*

“My work on State Prisons is not without merit, for my soul, emboldened by persecution, has elevated my genius which suffering had brought low. I so little believe that I have exceeded the boundary line of duty of a good subject, or the moderation of a prudent citizen, that I shall immediately send the manuscript to him who has the inspection of the place in which you have confined me. He is worthy to hear the truth, and capable of knowing it*.”

The Marquis of Mirabeau did not reply to this communication any more than to the other letters written by his son from Vincennes; and it was not till five years subsequently that he gave the following opinion of the “Lettres de Cachet.”

“This book is a furious farrago of nonsense, in which he has piled up all that can be said against despotism, joined to impudent pleadings in favour of rascals. It is seditious folly let loose†”.

* Letters from Vincennes, vol. ii. p. 222.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 6th 1783. We here give another extract containing a pretty just reproach in reference to M. de Rougemont, who is very violently attacked in the “Lettres de Cachet.”

“Very well, master! But in reading Voltaire, and Linguet, in their descriptions of the Bastille and Vincennes, we are sure to swallow as many lies as lives. What a noble use of time and memory! a stinking vessel can never furnish a good liquid; and for instance, to quote the ‘Lettres de Cachet,’ this Rougemont which the fellow treats so vilely, was his flatterer and the lackey of his grand airs. He was always at my house and elsewhere singing the

At length Mirabeau sent his manuscript to M. Lenoir, to whom he wrote :

“The only one of my manuscripts which I think interesting, useful, and stamped with a certain degree of maturity, has always been intended for you. Cast an attentive eye over it. I appeal to my honour, and to the author of my being at a moment when I know not what may be his decision regarding myself, for the truth of all the facts I have advanced. No doubt, they deserve your most serious attention*.”

In the ardour of his philanthropic and patriotic views, Mirabeau wanted to present this book to the King himself.

“I will say to him :”—he wrote to Sophie, “‘Learn,

~~fellow's~~ praises, and he has been rewarded for it as you see. All the ~~cases~~ of oppression he mentions, are well known histories of good-for-nothing scoundrels. These fellows lend each other arms and ~~manifestos~~, and all is swallowed as gospel truth. You judge wisely of this production which others have attempted to make me believe a fine thing; to which I have always replied: ‘I perceive that the age has recourse to dead men. So much the better—this consoles me for departing!’” *Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated June 9th 1783.* We may add, that M. de Rougemont revenged himself, in a manner as moderate as it was justifiable, by publishing fragments of thirteen letters, written from June 19th to December 31st 1777, in which Mirabeau, during the first six months of his detention, talks of his “lively gratitude.” This little collection is entitled “Authentic Letters from the Count of Mirabeau, serving as a supplement to his work on Lettres de Cachet and State Prisons.” Paris 1789, 47 pages 8vo.

* Letters from Vincennes, vol. iv. p. 320.

from me what you will never know from any body else! This is the fruit of my watchings and of my tears! From the gloomy cell of a hateful prison have I paid my debt to you and to my country, so far as I am able, seeing the weakness of my talents, and by being absolutely deprived of assistance. Learn the iniquities practised in your name, and in defiance of the most virtuous of your delegates! Crush those subaltern tyrants who deprive you of your noblest prerogative, that of reserving to yourself the treasures of mercy of which you are the sole dispenser, and of leaving severity to the law. Read, Sir, and search for the truth which will be hidden from you unless you find it out yourself. I have not purchased too dearly, at the cost of my sight, my health, and half perhaps of my life, this moment when I am able to tell and show it to you, if the consequences turn out as fortunate for my fellow-citizens as I may reasonably expect from your benevolence and your equity *.' ”

We shall be pardoned for giving these particulars if, without even considering the merit of the work, the reader will take the trouble to observe how much the above extracts do honour to the Author's memory, by proving that even when he considered himself upon the point of death, he defended justice and humanity against despotism, and devoted his last thoughts to the

* Ibid. Vol. v. p. 6.

holy cause of which, contrary to his expectations, he was afterwards to become the most eloquent and most courageous defender *.

* These same extracts render it unnecessary for us to refute a species of romantic tradition propagated by writers who have attempted to speak of Mirabeau without knowing him, and without even taking the trouble to read the work in which they might best have studied him, that is to say, the *Letters from Vincennes*. According to this tradition the work upon *Lettres de Cachet* and *State Prisons* was very secretly written in the Donjon of Vincennes; and when Mirabeau left this prison he concealed in the lining of his waistcoat the rough manuscript consisting of blank leaves torn from books upon which the captive had written his work. The real manuscript, wholly in Mirabeau's hand-writing and in our hands, is an assemblage of uniform and regular books of sheets of paper stitched together, and the care with which they are written attests the application, entirely unshackled, of the author. The first writer who published this fabulous tradition is Cadet-Gassicourt, p. 25 of the first edition of his work, and 19 of the second. The same error exists in P. Chaussard's summary, p. 44 of the second edition; in the "*Nouvelle Biographie des Contemporains*" by Messrs. Arnault, Jay, Jouy, &c. vol. xiii. p. 351; also in M. Merilhou's work.

The following is another mistake by a writer who, to say the truth, is renowned for the inaccuracy and thoughtlessness of his assertions. The Abbé de Montgaillard, who speaks of Mirabeau's work without having even read the title page, (for he calls it vol. i. p. 281, "*Letters on Lettres de Cachet*") asserts, vol. ii. p. 170, in a note, that according to the "*Red Book*," Mirabeau received, in 1776, 3,500 livres for his manuscript. Now in 1776, the author was either in concealment or in prison, and had not yet thought of this work, which as we have shown, was written several years after.

Lastly, we must mention another assertion equally false, but of a more serious character, which would deserve a lengthened comment from us here, had we not already refuted it in several parts of the

The book upon *Lettres de Cachet* and State Prison is so well known that we have not much to add to the preceding purely biographical mention we have made of it. We therefore give, in a note*, a simple analysis

present work. Some pamphleteers, among others Peltier, to whom a pamphlet is attributed entitled "*Domine Salvum fac Regem*," have stated that the book upon *Lettres de Cachet* was written by the Bailli of Mirabeau; and M. Barbier, in the "*Dictionnaire des Ouvrages anonymes et pseudonymes*" (Paris: Barrois, 1823, vol. ii. p. 269, No. 10,015), gravely adds: "the work contains too many quotations to allow of the belief that it was written at the BASTILLE."

Whoever has read our previous volumes must be convinced that the Bailli of Mirabeau had nothing to do with the "*Lettres de Cachet*;" and whoever has read a page of that work must have discovered the real author, who appears in every sentence. With reference to the quotations, which are very numerous, Mirabeau has obtained them during his preceding studies, and preserved them in the developed extracts he was always in the habit of making, for he always read pen in hand. We possess a portion of these extracts.

* CHAP. I.—Arbitrary orders formally censured by our laws ever since the foundation of the monarchy up to our own times. Cruelty of the Valois dynasty, and particularly of Louis XI. towards state prisoners. At what period *Lettres de Cachet* began to increase. First and only edict that authorises them.

CHAP. II.—Principles of natural law. Formation of human societies. Indispensable condition of such communities. Respect of property, or justice founded upon physical sensibility, love of self and reason imperiously demanded by our nature, independently of any religious system, is the first tie that binds men together, and the only point of union necessary to society.

CHAP. III.—The preceding principles are independent of any system of religion, and it would be a great good if this truth were generally admitted. Priestly despotism the necessary cause of civil despotism.

CHAP. IV.—Collusion between the civil and ecclesiastical autho-

of it, consisting of the contents of the chapters in the first part—being the only part containing a theoretical

ities. Justice, the common source of all human connexion, is the foundation of the reciprocal rights of the people and the sovereign, whatever be the origin of the different governments established among men.

CHAP. V.—Origin of the right of punishment. Distribution of the judicial authority. The exercise of justice is absolutely incompatible with arbitrary orders and imprisonments. These are more formidable to political liberty, and more intolerable to the individuals who suffer by them, than any other species of vexation, or even than sanguinary violence.

CHAP. VI.—Arbitrary and unlimited imprisonments, far from being necessary and proper in state affairs, become the more unjust and baneful. Licentiousness, far from being the extreme of liberty and its natural effect, is precisely the reverse.

CHAP. VII.—Proofs of fact. Limited authority has always been the most severe. In France, the government need fear nothing but its own excesses. Despotism has always led to revolution; and the union in one person of the three powers, legislative, executive, and judicial, has always produced despotism.

CHAP. VIII.—Whenever the monarchy is unlimited, chance alone can preserve a nation from tyranny. Refutation of the principles of the Economists on this point. The government does not cease being responsible for private evil, except when it does not disturb the due course of law. If it pretends to do everything by itself, despotism is inevitable, with all its consequences.

CHAP. IX.—Refutation of a principle of Montesquieu, who thinks that, in certain cases, liberty must be suspended. The iniquity of Ostracism. Censorship. BILL OF ATTAINDER. THE HABEAS CORPUS ACT.

CHAP. X.—Police of great cities. Examples of Holland and England. Meaning of the word NECESSITY in its political acceptance.

CHAP. XI.—The prerogative of inflicting arbitrary and unlimited imprisonment, considered with reference to individuals. Are there

development of the subject ; for the second is nothing more than a description of the interior of the prison of Vincennes, with an account of the petty exactions practised there, and the vexatious severity of the commandant ; a description in which Mirabeau has been reproached with giving a multitude of insignificant details which would better have suited a complaint addressed to the government, and are unworthy of the attention of posterity *. The third part, which with the second

crimes which ought not to be revealed? Composition of state prisons. Effects which must result from a residence in them, where oppression equalises persons and things, whether the prisoners communicate with each other or whether they do not. Houses of Force. State prisons considered with reference to the population.

CHAP. XII.—View of the history of France from Philippe-le-Bel to our own times.

CHAP. XIII.—*Lettres de cachet* threaten the great, that is to say, those who invoke them, still more than persons of inferior station ; but they may despoil both classes of all they possess. The spirit of caste, and the jealousy of the several orders of the state towards one another, support despotism. Legal forms are a necessary safeguard to liberty and innocence. Even the good that can be effected by illegal means is fatal to society.

CHAP. XIV.—If *lettres de cachet* confound the innocent with the guilty, it is a sufficient reason for perpetually abolishing this method ; for any method that tends to sacrifice an innocent man, were he alone against all, to a pretended public interest, is tyrannical. *Lettres de cachet* do not preserve families from disgrace, by withdrawing the guilty from society and from the regular courts of justice. If, according to our prejudices, infamy were not personal, the sovereign might make it so if he pleased.

* Without being stopped by this consideration, Mirabeau was anxious to publish every thing, in order to warn the government,

constitutes the second volume, is scarcely anything more than a collection of documents in support of the author's statements; so that, strictly speaking, the work is comprised in the first volume, in which alone the reader must seek one of the author's principal claims to fame.

We speak not of literary fame; for as a literary work it has many blemishes. It is often very diffuse; there is a great abuse of quotations, much declamation, and inequality, and numerous imperfections of method and style. This book, therefore, though the fruit of vast reading, and the most assiduous labour *, is less remarkable for literary skill than for immense research wholly directed to a patriotic object, and displaying a patience equal to that of the most laborious among

make it uneasy, and even coerce it by an exposure, of which, however, he boldly assumed the responsibility.

"I will state all I know concerning the houses peopled by *lettres de cachet*: all that I know from having seen it myself; for I have imposed upon myself a law not to advance a single fact of which I have not been either a witness or an example, and of which I am unable, if necessary, to give legal proof. And may I be punished by the eternal contempt of honest men if I alter or exaggerate in the least degree any of the details contained in this work."—*Lettres de Cachet*, vol. i. p. 259.

* It appears in one of the letters written to Chamfort by Mirabeau, that the latter wished to re-write and correct the "*Lettres de Cachet*," and that he requests Chamfort's assistance in this undertaking. Evidently Chamfort did not care to comply with this request, and Mirabeau had not time to do it alone. *Letter dated November 4th 1783, the first in the collection*, p. 4.

men of erudition*, for the active philanthropy, and ardent patriotism which alone could support the author's courage in such labours, and for the views of a true statesman who had imbibed from his character and

* In the "Mélanges" by La Harpe we find an article which, though relating to the "Essay on Despotism," is equally applicable to the "Lettres de Cachet," the end and means of execution of which it explains much better than we can do. We therefore transcribe it here, with the more readiness because the work on *Lettres de Cachet* is, in reality, nothing but a development of the "Essay on Despotism."

"That which, in this work, will most strike men capable of attention and reflection, is not the quantity of reading which it supposes, but the choice of studies compared with the author's age.

"Among the numerous quotations with which the pages are charged, there are, no doubt, of eloquence, of poetry, and of literature, quite sufficient for a young man who must naturally delight in works of the imagination. But most of the quotations relate to history and public law. And it was not upon abridgments nor upon extracts made in our own times that he was content to cast a glance. It is evident that he went to the fountain-head and examined leaf by leaf the whole archives of the first ages of the Monarchy, which tire out even the indefatigable patience of the learned, and of writers upon public law—those collections so crude and so discouraging which yield a few valuable discoveries at the cost of so much *ennui*. This did not damp the first vivacity of a young man, who, besides, had all the tastes and passions peculiar to youth. It was also the nature of his work, and the contrast it formed with the author's situation—it was this truly singular mixture, which prepared and showed from afar the man of the revolution.

"From this moment, he had an object which he never lost sight of: he was resolved to confound and unmask those mercenary writers paid to corrupt and pervert historical monuments, and to efface, if possible, all traces of the ancient freedom of the Franks. Alarmed at the progress of philosophy, and at the researches of true sciences,

genius the vocation which he felt and proved so long beforehand and afterwards so gloriously accomplished.

Two observations naturally occur to the readers of the "Lettres de Cachet," as well as to those of the "Essay on Despotism." The first, relates to the prodigious erudition of the author, who, writing in prison, was necessarily deprived of books, and could refer for the numberless quotations he used, only to his memory, or to notes taken during his very imperfect studies which were constantly undertaken and as

which combined argument with facts in favour of the rights of nations, the government had imagined those political frauds which call to mind the pious frauds so much lauded in the primitive church. Mirabeau opposed the Moreaus* the Linguits, the Caveyracs, the Rousseaus and the Mablys. Indignant at this monstrous traffic of lies and corruptions, he feared not to immerse himself in the dust of libraries and the darkness of past ages, to pursue and hunt out the base champions who concealed themselves behind heaps of altered and falsified quotations, as in the fairy tale a knight is represented covered with a diamond buckler, who made all magical enchantments disappear before him. Thus the young combatant, armed with the buckler of truth, attacked and overthrew, when only twenty three years of age, those veteran soldiers of despotism. It was with the statute books of Charlemagne, the collections of Ludwig, Bouquet, and Loisel, and the Norman laws in his hand, that he exposed all the falsehoods of Moreau in his pretended History of France, and all the sophistry of Linguet in his extravagant libels." *La Harpe's "Mélanges inédits de Littérature," collected by J. B. Salgues, Paris, Chaumerot, 1810.*

* Mirabeau in pp. 213, 214 of the "Essay on Despotism," has shown, article by article, and text in hand, the sophistry and falsifications contained in Moreau's work entitled, "Leçons de Morale, de Politique, de Droit Public, puisées dans l'Histoire de notre Monarchie."

often interrupted amid the storms of his youth *. The other observation relates to the infinite pains taken by the author to establish, not only by the most pressing arguments, but by a multitude of historical records, the illegality of discretionary arrests and detentions, without examination, without prosecution, or trial, or publicity.

Such illegality appears to us incredible at the present time because it has become impossible, thanks to the concessions gained from despotism by the revolution of which the author of the "Lettres de Cachet" was one of the principal leaders. These concessions are

* "This is written at the beginning of 1778, and I have been shut up ever since the first months of 1777, with very few books, without public journals, without any correspondence, and deprived of every kind of society. I know nothing therefore of facts subsequent to this period, and I should be obliged to trust wholly to memory if, from a small portion of my papers being restored to me, I had not found a few memoranda and extracts concerning the matter I am treating, collected among the materials for a great work, of which this was to have formed, as it were, only a chapter."—*Lettres de Cachet*, Vol. i. p. 215.

"If I have not done better, it is because such a thing is impossible, both for want of genius, and for want of assistance. It is in the midst of the most erratic and agitated life that I have acquired the little knowledge I possess. I never had a master, and I have no longer an adviser. Separated from my friends, deprived of books, correspondence, quiet, freedom, health—of all indeed except sensibility and leisure, it is impossible to be beset with more difficulties. But, free or not, I will claim with my latest breath the rights of the human species. What moment is better calculated to wage war against despotism than that when one is bearing its chains!"—*Lettres de Cachet*—Introduction, p. 11.

henceforth permanent and indestructible; and the most valuable of them, civil liberty, occupied Mirabeau's mind, as a legislator and political reformer, to a greater extent, because his own sufferings had enabled him to appreciate the benefits of that freedom of which he was so often deprived, and had attached him to a cause which, independently of this, the peculiar nature of his mind would have led him to embrace even amid independence and prosperity.

We shall not say much of the "Espion Dévalisé" * a contemptible rhapsody, even on the admission of Mirabeau himself†. It is a collection in which, with the exception of five, each chapter is a witty narrative, but either frivolous, humorous, or indecent. The only parts of the work worthy of arresting the attention of men of sense and taste, are Chapters II and III, concerning the comptroller-general Silhouette and the Chevalier Turgot, and giving some piquant details concerning the haughty carelessness of Louis XV; Chap. IV, relating to the minister de Baynes, giving some curious facts concerning the duplicity of kings, including the austere Louis XVI, who, notwithstanding, was severe even to harshness; Chapter VI, containing straightforward and judicious advice given to this well-meaning King by his valet de chambre Duret, who well deserved the condescending familiarity of such a master; lastly,

* London, 1782, 8vo, 240 pages, with this epigraph: "Feliciter

Chapter V., containing a dialogue, evidently fictitious, but full of wit and reason, in which a clever questioner leads Count Maurepas to explain the line of conduct he pursued during seven years with the young monarch, who in his confidence, which was quite filial, had called Maurepas to office, thinking him wise because he was old. This dialogue, in our judgment, gives an excellent and most animated likeness of the octogenarian courtier, whose age had increased instead of correcting his natural levity of disposition, and who, in his excessive selfishness, the only true mark of age upon him, busied himself only in finding means to preserve the enjoyment of power. He took care however to shut his eyes to the approach of events which he foresaw, calculating their effects with regard to the future only in a manner to assure himself that the term of his life, which he accurately anticipated, would place him beyond such effects. He never attempted to take measures against what he expected would happen, nor for the King's safety. He never sought to enlighten the monarch with the true light of politics and government which this unhappy prince was eager to acquire; nor to impart to him what he wanted—a knowledge of mankind, that experience which, according to circumstances, can overcome or tolerate resistance, and more especially that energy of character which can give a King the power, in politics as in every thing else, of surmounting nature or replacing it by a substitute.

Mirabeau never deceived himself concerning this

publication, so unworthy of his name, and which, like two others still more censurable, could only have been written in consequence of his pecuniary distress. Therefore, he took advantage of the want of proof, to disavow these works *.

We shall conclude what we have to say concerning the “Espion Dévalisé” with a further instance of the implacable animosity of the Marquis of Mirabeau.

“Observe that this book, in which he believed he had written but a good story, gives, for the first and perhaps the last time in this world, a recipe for, and indicates the place of action of a poison, slow, inevitable, and imperceptible in its effects, and which leaves no trace †. Weigh this in your mind, my only brother, friend, and supreme counsellor ‡.”

* According to our autograph manuscript, Mirabeau did not write a line of chapters x and xviii. The latter contains a long paper, fastidious and often abusive, concerning the *Maitres des Requêtes* and *Intendants*, said to have been supplied by the ex-Intendant Baudouin, one of Mirabeau's fellow-captives. The former chapter is a description of bull-fights in Spain, and was written by M. Dallery, French Consul at Barcelona, who died at Paris in 1807, after a long career of virtue, talents, and services, very little known and but badly rewarded.

† This is an allusion to the details in chapter viii. p. 95 and following, on the composition and effects of a slow poison, supposed to be *Aqua Tophana*, composed of opium and cantharides, and to have been brought from Naples, and used in 1765, to remove the Dauphin, son of Louis XV, and in 1766, to poison the Princess Maria Josepha of Saxony, the Dauphin's widow.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 6th 1785.

The Bailli hastened to repel the hateful insinuation.

“On the subject of the ‘Espion Dévalisé’, I have nothing to reply, except that your son swears he wrote only a few chapters which he has shewn to me, and not the narrative in question. I know the name of the writer. As for the recipe which it contains, I heard it mentioned thirty years ago at Naples, but I do not believe in it *.”

We have also the manuscript of “Memoirs of the Administration of the Duke d’Aiguillon †” the greater

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 11th 1783.

The publication of the “Lettres de Cachet” and the “Espion Dévalisé,” made Mirabeau run some risks, although he disavowed one and did not avow the other. We do not think it necessary to give concerning so important a fact the particulars to be found in Vitry, p. 280, and in Peuchet, vol. ii. pp. 127, 128 and 129. But, we must notice a shade of difference, in the letter to Vitry, which proves the estimation in which Mirabeau held his work on *Lettres de Cachet*.

“This,” he wrote, “is a different kind of work, and makes, they say, the most enormous sensation”

Peuchet, who is always in the habit, sometimes for his own ends, and sometimes from negligence, of falsifying all he transcribes, has written “*the greatest sensation*.”

“It is added that my name is in everybody’s mouth. I should like to know whether there is any exaggeration in this statement, and likewise what risks this may make me run. At all events the danger in this respect is not unattended with profit; for it is difficult for such a work not to confer some reputation—nevertheless it is a dangerous and dearly bought reputation.”—Letters to Vitry, p. 281.

† “Mémoires du Ministère du Duc d’Aiguillon, Pair de France, et de son commandement en Bretagne, pour servir à l’Histoire de

part of which was written by Mirabeau. This fact being but little known *, we are bound to explain it, at the same time that we give an account of the work itself, which is remarkable in many respects.

The contents of the manuscript, which is composed of a pretty long consecutive text, without any division into books, chapters or sections, and of a great number of detached articles, being the parings of the “Espion Dévalisé,” convinces us that Mirabeau did not mean to write a book, but had only collected materials for forming a future and better assorted collection of historical extracts†. The book which has been published is in a different form, that is to say, it has a form, whilst the manuscript has none. The printed volume

la fin du Règne de Louis XV, et à celle du Commencement du Règne de Louis XVI.” Paris : Boisson, 1792. 8vo. A volume of 392 pages.

* We find it mentioned only in the “Dictionnaire des anonymes et pseudonymes,” by Barbier. Paris : Barrois, 1823. Vol. ii. p. 384, No. 11,589; and in the article “Soulavie” of the “Biographie Ancienne et Moderne.” Paris : Michaud, 1823. Vol. xliii. p. 180.

† This supposition does not appear to us destroyed by the following passage containing the only allusion made by Mirabeau to these memoirs.

“A very interesting work upon a former minister will soon appear. You shall have it at first hand, and you will read it with pleasure.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Vitry*, p. 27. At this period (August 23d 1781) Mirabeau might have considered as an event about to take place, the speedy publication of this work, of which he gave up the idea soon afterwards when he went to Franche-Comté and thence to Provence.

consists of a series of eleven chapters, and these divisions must have been made up of sutures and fillings-up by Soulavie *, who, as it is well known, made a practice of fabricating books with documents and materials collected by all sorts of means; falsifying the whole by additions or omissions, and making up works to all appearance homogeneous and authentic, to which he affixed the names of pretended writers who never wrote a line of them, or who, if they did write or contribute any portion, would never have consented to lend their names to such speculations.

These manœuvres, so familiar to Soulavie, are evident in every page of the “Memoirs of the Duke d’Aiguillon.” Without examining the manuscript, it is easy to detect the hand of an inattentive and clumsy maker-up, by a sort of chaotic confusion, in which the text is confounded with notes that in the manuscript were separated from it; by the interpolations of the editor, who sometimes states a second time, or else contradicts what, in another place, he has allowed to be the writer whose work he has falsified; the narrative which sometimes

leads to the supposition that the work is dated several years subsequent to the period when in some other part it necessarily stops. In a word, we do not hesitate to state that this is a medley got up without reflection, without critical skill, and without any real elaboration, from different heterogeneous materials which would have no connexion in the hand of a real author, but which have been forcibly brought together by the covetous editor with the aid of additions for the most part discordant, and for the purpose of converting a collection of detached fragments, sometimes of detached leaves, picked up anywhere, into a book calculated to excite public curiosity*.

The reader shall judge of this work from a rapid sketch :—

The first five books contain the history, intermingled with numerous episodes and digressions, of the intrigues of the Duke of Choiseul. This nobleman, from the year 1763, attempted to unite several departments under his control, in order to enjoy the power of prime

* Some passages in the manuscript and the first paragraph of the author's remarks (p. 327) would lead to the supposition that the plan had been to give to the work the form of "Memoirs addressed to some prince or nobleman enjoying the Queen's confidence, and to serve as a rule of instruction for this prince's conduct at court." The editor, however, who from time to time returns to this point of view, loses it immediately afterwards; and with the exception of some rare passages, at least in the printed work, everything belies

MEMOIRS OF MIRABEAU.

er though the title was refused him. To the
ulars of some events of secondary importance,
diffusely narrated, whilst facts of very grave im-
portance are totally omitted, succeeds an account of
the death of the Dauphin, son of Louis XV, the
strange appearance and disgraceful influence of Madame
du Barry, the dismissal of the Duke of Choiseul, the
appointment of the Duke d'Aiguillon, the death of
Louis XV, the accession of his successor to the throne,
and the recal of the parliament. It relates the ma-
nœuvres of the Choiseul and Aiguillon parties against
each other, the effect of which was the dismissal of
both rivals, who, in seeking to exclude each other,
lost the chances of success which the grateful affection
of the queen held out to the one, and the patronage of
an all-influential uncle (the Count de Maurepas), toge-
ther with some personal feelings on the part of the
King, whose father, from hatred to Choiseul, had
patronised D'Aiguillon, held out to the other.

The sixth and seventh books, of which there are
no traces in our manuscript, and in which the stamp
of Mirabeau's mind is nowhere visible, are evidently
the work of Soulavie. They contain what he term-
ed an examination of the Duke of Choiseul's administra-
tion, but what in reality is a base libel, where, side by
side with a number of false statements, malevolent
concealments of facts, imaginary pictures, exaggerated
and blunders of every description for the

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most part wilful and calculated, are repeated the absurd and atrocious calumnies which accuse a minister, whom we admit to have been vain and thoughtless, but who was able and firm, honest and patriotic, of having poisoned Madame de Pompadour, the Queen Mary Leszczinska, the Dauphin, the Dauphiness Maria-Josepha of Saxe, &c.

Books VIII, IX, X, and XI, which are not by Mirabeau, but formed of different fragments of his unconnected and badly put together, resume the narrative, which had been interrupted by the interpolations of Books VI and VII. The work now relates, in terms sometimes of praise, sometimes of bitterness, and often distorts, the different services of the Duke d'Aiguillon, and the institution, vicissitudes and enterprises of the parliament. It points out the dangers which threaten the monarchy; the attempts already made to destroy the popularity of the Queen; the line of conduct which she ought to pursue, in order to disconnect herself from the political movement to which her advisers are imprudently driving her; the advantages to be gained by her assuming the direction of a general system of improvement combining useful economy with useful expenditure, which would form a department for her suitable to her sex, her age, and her rank, and in which she would assume the management of general acts of benevolence, the guardianship of charitable institutions, the patronage of the fine

arts, and thereby regain the affection and confidence of the nation.

Among these counsels, given without much order, in Books X and XI. are two articles, the more singular and remarkable because they contain the principles somewhat developed, of a system to which we shall have occasion to revert on reaching the period when Mirabeau, being called to the assistance of the sinking monarchy, consented to league himself with it against anarchy, and sought to obtain a fulcrum in the co-operation of the Queen, whose influence he appreciated, and was anxious to render useful.

We shall here dwell a little upon this part of the work, not for the purpose of defending the incoherence of inserting a plan for directing public works, in a memoir of the Duke d'Aiguillon, formerly in charge of the department of foreign affairs, and who for seven years past had been wholly out of office, and could not therefore have been minister when the work was published, — but to call the reader's attention to the singular fact that Mirabeau, in his prison *, his mind

* The manuscript we have bears no date; but we have every reason to believe that it was written, or at least begun, at Vincennes; and completed many years before its publication, which took place in 1792. Several circumstances lead us to this conviction, and, among others, pages 61, 195, 262, and 307 of the printed work, which prove that the book, or at least the chapters to which they belong, were written during the lifetime of the minister Turgot, the Count de Maurepas, the architect Soufflot, and Archbishop Apchon, all of whom died in 1781 and 1782.

being constantly directed to public affairs, assumed the office of state councillor, and at the same time invested himself with a species of edileship by seeking methodically for the most judicious means of improving the salubrity of the metropolis and beautifying it, although he had never resided in it except as a traveller and during a short period, and was scarcely acquainted with its localities.

Thus in promising the Queen that "if she assumed the direction of these improvements, she would acquire a right to immortality and become the idol of the Parisians and of all France*," Mirabeau reminds her that the Dauphin, father of Louis XVI, intended, on his accession to the throne, to fix his residence at Paris, —an event which, by abandoning Versailles, would have produced an incalculable saving of expenditure; and

* P. 257. This sentence is copied literally from the printed book. We here give a few additional lines which exist in our manuscript, and which Soulavie either has not used, or did not obtain.

"I repeat that the honour and interest of this amiable Princess, strenuously urge her to trample under foot all intrigues, all hatred, all vengeance, and to incline towards an object in which she will find the only advantages, and the only glory to which she ought to attach any importance. Let her leave the cares of the government to those able to bear their weight; let her assume the charge of the department of fine arts—she is their natural protectress, inasmuch as the King has no taste for them. The Queen, on the contrary, loves them, and may be indebted to them for her sweetest pleasures for the celebrity most flattering to her, and for the popularity of which her good sense renders her ambitious."

MEMOIRS OF MIRABEAU.

he Prince likewise intended to carry into execution a number of new works, the idea of which the or adopts, adding his own views on the subject. He recommends first that the great gallery of the ouvre should be finished; and that, when complete, it should be adorned with the King's pictures, "cubically piled up in the depot at Versailles*"; and it would then form a Museum preferable to all those of Italy†."

He next proposes to build a parallel gallery, so as to complete the junction between the Louvre and the Tuileries. Here should be placed the royal library, an establishment the improvement of which, he states to be more and more necessary and which he points out the means of effecting‡.

He further demands the execution of a plan for giving to the parish of St. Marguerite an ancient Basilic, a species of edifice which, he says, "does not exist in Christendom§, but with which it behoves us to enrich our modern arts;" for all the decorations of our churches are inside. Why should they not be adorned for the worship of the Divinity; but the exterior embellishes the city||.

poses great and healthy openings, such as from the Place Vendôme to directed since the

Revolution, provided for even by reserves made in the sale of the crown lands, but which, nevertheless, has not yet been carried into execution: we allude to the opening of a street, upon the axis of the Pantheon (then St. Geneviève) which should extend to the Luxembourg*. On this occasion he offers a tribute of praise to the memory of the architect Soufflot who died August 29th 1781, at the moment when the author announced the vast projects which this celebrated architect proposed to execute.

The author calls for† the erection of two great bridges, one facing the Hotel des Invalides, the other facing the Jardin du Roi; the removal of the buildings still remaining upon several of the bridges within the city‡, also the removal of the Hotel Dieu and the destruction of its dependencies which conceal the river and break the line of quays§; the formation in the street of foot-pavements||; “the materials for making which are abundant in France, which, between Dunkerque and Nantes, contains four hundred leagues of coast, consisting of granite rock¶.” He pleads strongly for a popular benefit which at a later period long occupied his mind**. “Paris,” says he, “has no water. How is it that this idea does not stimulate the minds of those who, in an instant, can give a powerful impulse? The

* P. 262. † P. 262. ‡ P. 299. § P. 297. || P. 267. ¶ P. 276.

** Farther on we shall have occasion to notice Mirabeau's writings upon the “Waters of Paris.”

aqueducts at Rome supply that city with five hundred thousand hogsheads of water; Lyons has eighty-three thousand from gutters and arcades; Limoges has numberless works of this description; and what was Limoges to the Romans *?" He recommends the plan of Deparcieux, who offered to bring to Paris the waters of the Yvette and also those of the Eure, by making use of the works erected by Louis XIV at Maintenon and abandoned by that monarch after a frightful expenditure of men and money†. He proposes adopting the custom of the Romans, and employing in public works those troops whose health and condition would be improved by it without any detriment to discipline; "for the soldier bent towards the earth, and inured to rustic labour, would raise himself up all the better when facing the enemy ‡;" but as only a temporary and limited assistance could be obtained from the troops so employed, he observes that all the laborious population would be glad to assist in such works, too useful for the expense to be regretted; "for no doubt it is much better to pay architects, sculptors, painters, and women, than courtesans §."

* P. 293.

† P. 293 to 297.

‡ P. 285.

§ Page 246. Mirabeau's notions, partly borrowed from philanthropists, suggested notions to Soulavie, who has in Book XI, in his own name, an article proposing many improvements which have since taken place: such as the opening of squares, by pulling down the churches of St. Honoré, St. and St. Victor, the seminary of St. Sulpice, the convent of

"But," he goes on to say, "it is not sufficient to give work to the able-bodied poor, we must also think of those who are unable to work. Here more especially the Queen can and ought to interfere. There are kinds of good to be done that are not expensive, and which fall more directly upon the spot where want exists. When the royal family bestow alms, they charge the Lieutenant of police to distribute them, and he knows the wants of the population only through the commissaries of the different *quartiers*. The true indigent of the metropolis are those who are not seen. It is a proud poverty, which devours good families whom misfortune deprives of even the power of complaining, and who cannot be relieved because this being known would be to them the greatest of misfortunes. In isolated garrets, are to be found wretched families suffering under unexpected reverses, atrocious calumnies, base treachery, and all the cruel sports of fortune. Can it be supposed the commissaries of the *quartiers* ever enter these labyrinths of grief? . . . These mercenary men, sold to favour, to caprice, to the wickedness of the rich, and, above all, to the man of the police, make him such reports only as coincide with his own views. Connected by profession with the lawyers,

the *faïrs* of St. Germain, the convent of gray friars opposite the new *Ecole de Médecine*, the opening of the great avenue between the Luxembourg and the Observatoire, and the junction of the Rue de Seine and the Rue de Tournon. Pp. 271 to 284.

incorporated among the menials of the courts of justice, ramping before the magistrates of the Chatelet, corrupters or corrupt, a whirlwind of cares, business, projects, hopes, and amusement, carries them away from the abode of sorrow. They know not, or they forget the misfortunes which surround them; and if chance should cause an unfortunate person to be distinguished from the crowd, it is often to add a personal misfortune to the ills already endured. To the kind parish priests is it left to console these poor sufferers, condemned to drag on their painful life amid suffering and want! I have seen the Curé of St. Eustache, and several others, ascend to a fifth story, in the middle of winter, to console the indigent and relieve their necessities. To these worthy depositaries ought to be entrusted the alms so erroneously and improperly distributed. The assistance would then reach the source of want, and the respectable poor would be a hundred times more pleased at receiving relief from their spiritual pastors than through the ministerial agency of the police.

I mention the Curé of St. Eustache, because he is in communication with the royal family. Many others are equally deserving of mention. But if I speak only of Paris, because at court nothing is spoken of but Paris, it is not less true that the wants of this city are the least urgent of any, and that as much care must be taken not to create new paupers as to relieve those who already exist. With regard to the latter, it would be

at least necessary to give to all the parish priests in the kingdom a sufficient income to live ; for they will not aid your poor if they are themselves in poverty. The Curés, in some provinces, in Brittany for instance, have scarcely three hundred livres * a year. What necessity is there for the Archbishop of Auch to have 500,000 livres a year? Not but he makes a good use of it. Archbishop Apchon† is one of the most respectable prelates in the kingdom, but he is mortal. The diocess of Cambrai has not always had a Fenelon. When shall a portion of these enormous revenues be taken and distributed among all the Curés in the kingdom? Madame Louise‡ has just obtained 30,000 livres a year in corn and land, to be taken from the abbey of St. Germain, for the support of the Carmelites of the kingdom. Assuredly corn would grow equally well, if there were no Carmelites in France. But 30,000 livres a year, distributed among the poor Curés of the kingdom, would suffice to give, in a year of dearth, the indispensably necessary to a great number of honest poor §.”

We extract from Mirabeau's manuscript another piece of advice, which has not been published by Soulavie.

“ It is more than time to finish this long and shape-

* About £12. TR.

† Claude Marc Antoine d'Apchon, first a soldier, then Bishop of Dijon and Archbishop of Auch, died at Paris in 1782. It is well known that this prelate signalised himself at Auch by a remarkable act of courage and humanity.

‡ The Princess Louise, daughter of Louis XV, a nun in the royal abbey of St. Denis.

§ Pp. 304 to 307.

less collection of all sorts of dreams. You know my principles and opinions sufficiently well to have no doubt that I have made a great sacrifice to etiquette, to habit, and to prejudice, by fixing your view upon the metropolis alone. The rest of the kingdom is a stranger land to the great, which is the worst of evils. I wished to show you how many useful and great things you did not do, even in the place where you constantly reside. But would not travelling amuse your illustrious friend?—or her royal husband, who, if he remain at Versailles, will never complete his education either as a man or as a King? What a sad existence is that of sovereigns! They are shut up within a circle of forty leagues in diameter, the radii of which they perambulate as if by a constant oscillation. The active correspondence between the King of Spain and Louis XV, during twenty years, is curious. They wrote to each other every day, in the same terms. The King of Spain wrote:—‘At five o’clock I left St. Ildefonso, and the rendezvous for the chase was at the Round of St. Anthony.’ The same day Louis XV wrote from Versailles:—‘At ten o’clock I went to the Carrefour des Rossignols, at Compiègne, &c.’ And this went on during twenty years. Each monarch had his map, and followed the route of the other, as if they had been learned geographers studying Cook’s voyages!

“Let the Queen imitate her brother’s example*;

* Joseph II travelled a great deal, and visited France in 1777 and 1781.

let her travel, and excite her husband to travel likewise, without pomp—for pomp tends only to ruin, tire, and deceive. Let her travel Alas! very near the spot where the ostentation of wealth and luxury insults the misery of the people, the King and Queen will see, learn, and feel that which ministers and courtiers never tell them!”

After this judicious advice, Mirabeau gives a series of demonstrations which Soulavie has not inserted. He indicates some of the improvements of all descriptions required in the provinces, and which would be rapidly carried into effect if any appearance of royal solicitude, any well-timed encouragement were employed to stimulate the intelligent and laborious classes, give an impetus to industry, and a free range to the spirit of speculation and improvement which resorts to new means, and attempts useful application. The author alludes principally to the wants of agriculture. To illustrate his arguments by example, he mentions Brittany—backward, poor, and uncultivated. He recommends that the government should, in the first place, give life to this province, by making roads to facilitate a passage from it to other parts of the kingdom; to allow its neighbours to enter it, and its inhabitants to leave it. He recommends that its immense heaths should be turned to profitable use, and their borders parcelled out and divided among the poorer inhabitants. He especially urges that large tracts of land should be cleared.

“The wealth of a country,” he says, “consists solely in its agriculture. From it the population, and consequently the strength of a state, are derived. Colbert, to whom so many just reproaches may be made, was wrongfully accused when it was stated that he concerned himself about nothing but manufactories. It must be admitted that he rendered several ordinances favourable to agriculture. One of the most celebrated, promulgated the year before his death, and rendered in favour of Alsace, provides that ‘all persons who will occupy vain and vague lands may cultivate them to their own profit, and use them in full property.’ Colbert, just before he died, contemplated making this ordinance general throughout the kingdom; for he perceived what is very evident, that the King has a full quarter of his kingdom to conquer from enemies termed heaths, downs, and so forth; and that it is necessary to plough with one hand whilst the other prunes, in order soon after to cut down the parasitical and voracious tree of fiscality.”

The author, seeing the immensity of such an undertaking as clearing these waste lands, offers, for its execution, a plan which no one else would have imagined, especially at the period when he wrote.

“Conventicles of monks,” says he, “should be established in the most uncultivated parts of the kingdom, to do there that which they did a thousand years ago in different places. Monks can be useful to society in no other way. These conventicles must be

dispersed in the most barren spots, according to the system of the primitive church, and there supported, during the time necessary, by the profits of the newly-cultivated lands, which might afterwards be added to the mass of ecclesiastical property in the kingdom. By such means the monks would be usefully employed, the waste lands put into cultivation, the state enriched, and no one would have a right to complain."

"But," he again observes, "not only must the lands be cultivated but the inhabitants likewise. And why should not a former measure be adopted which time has justified?"

"In 1769, *married* men announcing a decided capacity for a trade, were selected from different families, and sent to Paris for a year. The circumstance of these men being married was considered a security for their return. Thus, the farrier was sent to Alfort, under Bourgelat *, the miller to Corbeil, the mason to St. Geneviève, the carpenter among the machinery at the opera, and the gardener to Montreuil. Each of these men, on his return, gained what he pleased; and they are now sent for from a distance of ten leagues round. It would be very useful if pupils were placed, in the same manner, under skilful agriculturists. Each would take back to his native place not only the tools proper for his calling, but

* Claude Bourgelat, a celebrated and learned veterinary practitioner, who was born in 1712, and died in 1779.

at knowledge which, being multiplied at the centre, will never reach the circumference, unless a zealous, active, and persevering government uses all possible means to overcome indifference and routine."

At the end of these plans of improvement, Mirabeau, to make their utility more evident, compares, in a scientific and ingenious manner, the ignorant and imperfect state of agriculture, not only of first ages of civilisation, but during the recess of Louis XIV, with the daily increasing skill displayed in modern agriculture; adducing a multitude of facts as conclusive as they are interesting, but which we cannot here insert, without carrying to a still greater length this already over-long digression.

Among the other works written by Mirabeau in the Donjon of Vincennes and which have remained unpublished, we must make a passing allusion to the "Dialogues" already mentioned. In these, the author gives a fervid and glowing account of the circumstances which led to his introduction to the Marquis of Monnier, and of the beginning and progress of a passion for a time single and silent, then mutual, energetic, and rash. After these "Dialogues," which ought to be forgotten, we may mention, on account of its connexion with them, another work entitled "Memoir of Sophie," a simple and affecting narrative written by the Marchioness of Monnier, of which Mirabeau

who had asked for and corrected it, speaks several times in the Vincennes correspondence, and also in his letters to Vitry*.

Lastly, we must also mention, 1st, a very learned dissertation upon "Inoculation of the Small-pox," written by Mirabeau at Vincennes. This was a work of considerable labour and patience, undertaken from paternal love. It is often alluded to in the Letters from Vincennes†, because Mirabeau intended the work for Sophie, who was opposed to the inoculation of their child; 2ndly, an incomplete translation of Tacitus, but with the life of Agricola complete. Of this translation Mirabeau speaks with but little confidence‡.

* Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. p. 81; vol. iii. pp. 154, 184, 231, 248, &c. Letters to Vitry, p. 38.

† Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. p. 215; vol. ii. pp. 412, 413, 433; vol. iii. pp. 148, 260, 375, 429, 439, 460, 508, 552, 594; vol. iv. pp. 73, 77, 142, 155, 202, 331, &c. This dissertation is also mentioned in the letters to Vitry, pp. 6, 10.

‡ Letters from Vincennes, vol. iii. p. 269; vol. iv. p. 15. The Marquis of Mirabeau mentions it in one of his letters:

"This gentleman, in prison, is translating Tacitus, as I am informed; for he writes incessantly. This author was the study of his great-grandfather (Honorius Marquis of Mirabeau) during the six years that he spent at Mirabeau."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated July 6th 1779.*

Mirabeau had conceived, but had not time to accomplish, the plan of a very important work upon history:

"Think you, my dear friend, that M. Le Noir would accept the dedication of a translation of Tacitus, to which I should dare to affix

It was his intention to revise it ; and, to confess the truth, it is not quite worthy of either the original author or the translator. 3rdly, "Considerations on Toleration *," a very extensive work, and full of bold and energetic views. 4th. The beginning of a prose translation of the *Epopée* of Silius Italicus. 5th. "Historical and Philosophical Views concerning Islamism." 6th. A compilation concerning the history of the Gatinais, and of the town of Gien†. 7th. Another vast compilation on the Revolutions of the United Provinces, from the irruption of the Cimbri and the Teutones to the middle of the fifteenth century. Several of these works, of which we have the auto-

supplements of my own in lieu of all that is lost, besides a great number of notes and dissertations? This extensive work, to which I am devoting the little talents I possess and the whole of my attention, is not near finished (although the rough draught of the translation is), nor can it be whilst I am in this place, for I am unable to obtain the different books to which I must refer. But this mark of respect shall be made not quite unworthy of a man whom I shall always feel a delight in calling my benefactor."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated June 3rd 1779.*

This title of benefactor was publicly given by Mirabeau to M. Le Noir on the publication of the "*Lettres de Cachet*." The following is the first sentence of the notice at the beginning of the second part :—

"M. Le Noir is my benefactor ; and I state it beforehand to those who may read this second part."

* Letters from Vincennes, vol. ii. p. 107.

† This manuscript, of which Sophie had been requested to collect the materials, is in her handwriting.

raph manuscripts, are, at least in part, in a fit state for publication. Hereafter we shall dwell upon them at greater length ; omitting, however, all that might gratify a frivolous or immoral curiosity, to which we will never make the least concession. We shall, at some future time, publish all that appears worthy of being laid before the public, and likely to sustain, if they do not increase, the author's reputation.

BOOK II.

THE reader has seen, in Book XII Vol. II, that after the compromise at Pontarlier, Mirabeau deferred his journey to Provence and went to Switzerland, where he remained about three months. His principal motive for going thither was to dispose of two of his manuscripts — the “Lettres de Cachet” and the “Espion Devalisé,” the sale of which he required to relieve his necessities. Another cause prolonged his stay there.

Having the public advantage always in view, he had carefully examined, as he travelled on, the system of custom-houses established by two neighbouring countries, the frontiers of which he was under the necessity of crossing and re-crossing. He considered the practice of restriction and prohibition, which then prevailed, to be prejudicial to the industry and commerce of France. Besides his general views concerning the freedom and independence of nations, he had adopted, with reference to custom-house dues, principles which

time and the revolution have, to a certain extent, accredited among us, but which, in other respects, appear new and hazardous, although in England they have lately been adopted, and are now in practice.

Mirabeau accordingly wrote a paper on this subject, addressed to Joly de Fleury, the Comptroller General, who was a kinsman of his mother's. We have the autograph production, but do not insert it here because it would lead us to too great a length, and we shall have occasion to mention it again in our account of the author's legislative labours. Besides, we feel bound to insert, in preference, another paper, also unpublished and in Mirabeau's hand-writing, because it displays him in his true character as a political man and a defender of oppressed nations.

Led accidentally into Switzerland, he could not behold without emotion and sympathy the state in which Geneva then was. This state so insignificant in territory, had nevertheless acquired considerable importance from the peculiar genius of its inhabitants, its geographical situation between France and Savoy, the usurping pretensions of the latter power, and the political connexion by which it had always secured the protection of the former.

It was to solicit that this protection, which had lately been partial and oppressive, should become generous and tutelary, that Mirabeau took the step of which we are about to give an account.

Very warm dissensions had recently burst forth in this small but unruly republic. There was an open collision betwixt the aristocratic body, holding the executive power, and the representatives, who complained that they were tyrannised over by the nobles, and were weary of the illusions of a system in which, though legally free, they were *de facto* slaves. The King of France had interfered, and sent troops demanded by the aristocracy. The representatives had been put down; many of them had fled; great numbers from the industrious classes were preparing to emigrate, and Geneva appeared on the eve of complete dissolution.

These circumstances forcibly struck Mirabeau, disposed as he always was, to make every public cause his own; and he conceived the idea of applying personally to the French government, and urging measures calculated to preserve Geneva from the threatened danger, and restore her to order and peace. At the period of his appeal at Pontarlier, he had had some correspondence with M. de Vergennes, who was a native of Burgundy, and was related to the Ruffey family. The following is the letter or statement which Mirabeau addressed, October 4th 1782, to that minister, whose policy was as prudent and able, as it was firm and generous*.

* This letter is mentioned in Vitry's Collection, pp. 253, 256.

“MONSIEUR LE COMTE,

“Forced by the circumstance which I had the honour to explain to you in my letter of the 4th of November last, to set out for Provence, I will hastily state my opinion of the affairs of Geneva with the freedom due from a friend of truth, to mankind, and to himself. I am persuaded that by stating it to you, on this occasion, wholly and without disguise, I am fulfilling a duty to my country, to my sovereign and to yourself, whose good intentions and talents I honoured long before you had acquired a right to my gratitude.

“You are aware that the affairs of Geneva have generally and deeply occupied all persons connected with Switzerland. I have therefore, during my residence at Neufchâtel, heard much of the hopes, fears and plans of the Genevese citizens who have incurred the displeasure of the French government. I shall not conceal from you that I have sought out several of these citizens, known by the name of Representatives, and, have seen them, sufficiently often, listened to them with sufficient attention, and observed them with sufficient care to discover their feelings, and make myself acquainted with the condition of their affairs.

“You know better than I do that the industry, spirit of calculation, and activity universally granted to these people—their morals, their economy, their skill, and their success are celebrated throughout Europe; and you will easily believe that the Repre-

sentatives, and more especially their leaders, who were banished from Geneva the moment the French troops entered that city, are not ignorant of this. Fortunately, they all cast a look of affection and regret towards their country; and, so long as they have any hope of returning to it with honour and security, doubt their pursuing the plans of settlement elsewhere, which other nations vie with each other in holding out to them.

“I know and have proof that the sovereigns throughout Europe entertain hopes that a considerable emigration of Genevese will take place, and are endeavouring to excite it. The Elector Palatine has made the most tempting offers to the Genevese, and when I state that he has done so, I mean to say, that they have in fact received, but not accepted, such offers. All the advances came from himself, and he did not disdain to leave them absolute masters of the conditions, and to promise them every guarantee they might require to insure the stability of their settlement in one of the most beautiful countries in Europe, blessed with one of the mildest governments.

“Several Princes of the Germanic body, of less importance I must admit, but more tempting from that very reason, as being more interested in obtaining a valuable colony, and less exposed to participate in the quarrels of the great powers, are also eager to take advantage of the precarious situation of the demo-

cratic party at Geneva; and attempt to make the Representatives believe that their country is lost to them, and their case hopeless. All offer them indemnities, a Genevese constitution, buildings, lands, and advances of capital.

“The Landgrave of Hesse Homburg, among others, well known for his prudence and the pious policy of his ancestor, who welcomed, courted, protected, and maintained the French driven from their homes by the revocation of the edict of Nantes, offers them a delightful asylum in Wetteravia, which, being near Frankfort, the principal mart in Europe, is the proper place for a *depôt* of watches, and clocks which are wanting throughout the North, now obliged to send to Geneva, for the productions of the watchmaker’s art which is a source of such extraordinary prosperity to the countries in which it is cultivated.

“The King of Prussia has not been the last to enter into the same views. In the interest of France, if the principality of Neufchâtel is never to belong to her, and if, as I believe, she is really interested in the prosperity of Geneva, I sincerely hope no one will give the King of Prussia the idea of cantonising the Genevese upon the species of promontory situated in the territory of Neufchâtel and called the Vawer, where the smallest colony, seated upon the river Thiele, already navigable and capable of being rendered more so, surrounded by the lakes of Bienne, Morat, and Neufchâtel, would become one of

most flourishing commercial entrepôts in the universe, and would soon drive old Geneva into oblivion. avoured as this city is by nature, it does not possess any thing like the advantages of the situation I have described, which is the best in Europe. But as hitherto Frederick has not appeared to wish the Genevese to settle anywhere but in his hereditary dominions, the harshness of the climate and an entirely military government probably constitute a sufficient preservative against any slight temptation.

“ The temptation which appears to me difficult for the Genevese to resist, if they do not find honour and security at home, is the offer of the English. I can affirm to you, with a degree of certainty to which some confidence is due, that the English government is at present seriously devising means to draw the Genevese in great numbers to the British islands. I say the British islands, because, if they wish to become colonists, Ireland, with a mild climate, less hot and less cold than Geneva, offers them noble estates in the country hitherto the worst cultivated and the wildest in Europe, but certainly the most fertile and the best situated for trade. Now, you know that the constitution which formerly rendered success of this nature impossible to the Irish, has been much modified, and seems likely to be modified still more.

“ Let me go further: it would be absurd to deny that Ireland is becoming the most free of any countr

in the world, and the most desirable for men who feel the value of freedom. The Genevese will there find the same spirit of political equality which they are anxious to preserve in their own country. They will there find a people united, associated, and disciplined, who will guarantee their liberties with their own. They will there find immense rights which this confederacy has obtained from Great Britain with reference to the trade of Ireland; the duties so moderate that they are scarcely felt; no excise; the produce of the soil at a price most favourable to manual industry; no corporate bodies of tradesmen, no regulating system, no police oppression. They will there find a parliament whose independence has been solemnly acknowledged, and which has just decreed that every foreigner who settles in Ireland, and takes the oath of allegiance, shall not only be naturalized but become an Irishman to all intents and purposes, as well with reference to entire freedom of trade as to political rights—with the sole exception of not being eligible to sit in either house of parliament, or in the King's privy council, or to hold any great office under the crown.

“Ireland will thus be more favourable to the Genevese than their own country ever was. And if the workmen of Geneva prefer transplanting to England the principal branch of their industry and of their prosperity, I mean watchmaking, Great Britain, which is far from having reached the same perfection in this art,

will joyfully give them establishments. Similarity of religion, uniformity of principles, and the good fortune of finding, in an adopted country, civil liberty more precisely determined and more firmly established than they ever found it even at Geneva—these, together with the advantage of being incorporated with a rich and calculating nation which will not refuse them, they require it, a considerable advance of capital, and very powerful motives to induce the Genevese to settle in England.

“ I doubt not a moment that if the Representatives continue to perceive that they are accounted as nothing in the state of which they form the most numerous class—that if their chiefs remain under the ban of proscription—that if the protection of surrounding states, especially your own, seems always exclusively bestowed upon the aristocracy who, after all, cannot pretend to be blameless, and whose deep and implacable hatred, and slow-coming revenge, are justly to be dreaded,—I have not the least doubt, I say, that a Genevese colony will be formed in England, and that, though at first weak and unambitious of being more numerous at the outset, it will soon form a nucleus for the discontented, for all citizens driven away by aristocratic pride,—in a word, for all the wise men of the state;—for wise men will prefer becoming the privileged subjects of a great sovereign, to remaining the disgraced and humiliated subjects of their equals. This

colony will be one of patriots, and to it will alternately be added all those who, being equally opposed to the violence to which the democratic party has been driven, and to the system of oppression which the Genevese will never be persuaded has not been invented by their magistrates, prefer a thousand times to their own pretended republic, a simply *municipal* city without that vain independence, that mock sovereignty which has ruined Geneva. In fact, the citizens of Geneva will always consider this silly and lying institution of theirs to be nothing but a board of tyrants, the more formidable from the facility with which they can deceive a great minister and a great monarch, unable to cast but a very imperfect glance upon the affairs of this little city and its whimsical government. Thus, the rulers of Geneva add to the fears of the people by making their most august protectors appear objects of dread.

“ For, let me tell you, if the Genevese, any more than the rest of the world, cannot depend upon ministers always just, and enlightened, and sufficiently well informed, or upon clerks incapable of deceiving those ministers, they have more to fear from such protection, from such judges of their happiness, than Asiatic slaves from their despots. Even in the East, there are rules and customs which are strictly observed to a certain extent, whilst here, the caprice of subordinates or a mistake of ministers may be the only code of laws for petty republicans so dependent as these are upon their neighbours.

“ If the Genevese should determine upon emigrating ~~to~~ to which assuredly you would not drive them, how, venture to ask, could you prevent them from effecting their purpose? Would you employ violence? Your generous heart would never consent to this; besides you well know how insufficient violence would be, and how directly contrary to your own views, whether from the invincible attraction which all defence gives to the human mind towards the thing defended, or from rendering the persecuted more interesting, as their first merit would always be that they are persecuted. And who would not consider equally hateful and alarming, measures for preventing the emigration of a people said to be independent, and whose political existence you had forcibly altered? Who would not claim for this people the liberty at least of withdrawing from the most painful recollections?

“ But do not deceive yourself: the Genevese who are now oppressed constitute that portion of their nation which is the most esteemed in Europe. It is in this class—and no foreigner doubts it—that are to be found the most industry, morality, and even moderation. This, you will say, appears very contrary to fact; but it is not so. Believe the word of a man who respects you too much either to flatter or to deceive you. The troubles at Geneva have not originated in the party that has been so sacrificed: they are a masterpiece of Machiavelism of the other party. I here engage to prove this to you in the clearest manner, if you will

only condescend to listen to me ; and to show you distinctly that if the Representatives had been less honest, more indifferent to the choice of means, more opulent, more favourably represented to you, better informed concerning events and the measures taken by their enemies and their neighbours, the aristocrats would not have triumphed. This discussion would however carry me too far. Allow me only to remind you of and explain to you an anecdote relating to yourself, which will show you what unworthy manœuvres, what means of all descriptions have been lately resorted to by the enemies of the Representatives.

“In March 1781, a base libel upon the affairs of Geneva was privately circulated at Paris. In this production, an attempt was made by the writer to wound your self-love, without reflecting that a man like you is, and ought to be, above such things, and to the meanness of allowing them to influence in the slightest degree his plans as a statesman. I have read this libel, and I also know, from one of your trusty subordinates, that it was represented to you as the work of the Representatives, and as a plot disclosed by the zeal of the Negatives.

“ Now, those to whom the most influence has been ascribed in the party of the Representatives, and against whom an attempt has been made to excite in your mind the strongest prejudice—I allude to Messrs. Clavière and Duroverai—offer you their lives, if any body can prove that a single line, or a single word personally

offensive to you, ever came from the pen of a Representative. I am convinced of their sincerity, because I possess the most conclusive evidence that the aristocrats have either among themselves or in their pay, men employed in inventing calumnies and propagating them in foreign countries. Thus, it is pretty clear that the libel, of which I have here reminded you was written by the negatives in order that it might be attributed to the representatives. This is an abominable but a worn-out snare. And yet its effects seldom fail with the great, whose knowledge never prevents them from being basely deceived,—because the height from which they look, at their fellow-men, is too inaccessible to truth, which like virtue is simple, modest, and obscure.

“But let us return to subjects more worthy of your attention than such vile, anonymous productions.

“Every thing leads me to believe that the Genevese are preparing to emigrate. The fact will be denied to you, or at least you will be told that it is improbable. You will be told that the mildness, the well-known, moderation of the Genevese, the attachment which it is impossible not to suppose the mechanics feel to their workshops, as the natural rendezvous of those who seek the productions of their art in the only country where it is truly honoured, do not warrant the belief in emigration, nor a doubt that the Genevese will readily bend their necks to the yoke, if firmness and perseverance be shown.

“You will be misinformed, and you will be imposed upon the more successfully, because several difficulties in the details may occur to delay the execution of the plan of emigration. I trust however that you will think, when all these fine things are told you, that what I have the honour to state to you is founded upon the most certain information and upon undoubted evidence. Do not lose sight of this fact, that the aristocrats have the greatest interest in this emigration taking place, because it would weaken and ultimately destroy at Geneva the party which has been striving against them for a century past. Be assured, likewise, that although it is very difficult for the Genevese to sever the bonds that link them to their native soil, and the negotiations of the power that would entice them to its dominions cannot therefore be immediately successful, it is impossible that Geneva can avoid being ultimately depopulated of all that gives her life, of all that feeds her industry. When the citizens and inhabitants are irritated each day by the appearance of an aristocracy necessarily insolent and oppressive, considering the narrow limits to which its movements and pretensions are confined—when they feel that they have no power to check this aristocracy, no rampart to defend themselves against it;—when they are imbued with the degrading and painful conviction that no description of merit, or talent can entitle them to consideration—that to obtain any degree of credit, it

is necessary to flatter the league of the wealthy, and enrol themselves among the protégés of the latter,—be assured that they will not cease wishing for another order of things, and will eagerly seek another country; that they will leave the aristocrats to dispute precedence with each other in old Geneva, which will then be deserted, impoverished, and degraded; and that the slightest nucleus formed to entice them to any country in which each can enjoy his own energy, will suffice to determine the majority of the rising generation to emigrate and transplant from Geneva all that is interesting to her neighbours.

“ When I say, ‘to any country,’ pray observe that the most absolute government would not hurt their self-love, nor discountenance their emulation to so great a degree as an exclusive aristocracy without counterpoise or rivalry. Even in monarchies, the most lowly subject finds no legal obstacle to his advancement in life. There are difficulties, it is true, but no impossibility that the highest ambition he can without madness conceive, shall be ultimately realised. Hope continually feeds his energy, if nature has given him any. How many valuable individuals, how many instruments of her honour and fame would France have lost, if at the head of the state there existed an aristocratic body which, not only by name but also by right, formed an impenetrable barrier between the throne and the people.

“I repeat that the inhabitants of Geneva are preparing to emigrate. It is evident that all the neighbouring powers are interested in such an event; because, if Geneva were only an entrepôt of trade for Lyons and the south of France with Switzerland and Italy and a great part of Germany, it would still remain a very important city. But Geneva was the original source of the trade and manufactories which have rendered Switzerland so flourishing. It likewise fertilises the stony soil of Savoy, conveys thither the small quantity of specie that circulates there, employs the Savoyard day-labourers, and lastly, shares its abundance with that country, the most disinherited in Europe. Geneva exercises a similar influence over the French provinces in its neighbourhood. France, to which this rich city lent a hundred millions of livres during M. Necker’s administration, derives greater benefit than any other power from the industry of this little state. Independently of the consideration that Geneva is the only military station, already fortified, which covers the kingdom from the Rhone to the Mediterranean, and defends the passage of the river, it appears beyond a question that every thing France can desire in this extremity of its dominions is, that Geneva should always remain populous and industrious, because without the aid of the Genevese, all the circumjacent country within a radius of ten leagues, would be wretched, deserted, and unknown; be-

cause trade alone may give life to a territory the soil of which is sterile, and in which agriculture can supply the wants of only a small number of inhabitants; and lastly, because no one is any longer ignorant, or has any doubt, that in a spot where nature has not herself placed commerce, freedom alone can create it. France would feel bitter regret if her natural rivals were enriched by the trade and industry of Geneva. The wounds, still recent and now generally known, which were inflicted upon us by the revocation of the edict of Nantes, have opened the eyes of the whole nation to the fatal consequences of emigrations from Geneva; and, I repeat, it is no longer in the power of the masters of the earth to prevent these emigrations by any other means than by a prosperous government,—that is to say, mild, prudent, and friendly to general freedom.

“Are there two means of rendering the government of Geneva such? I think not. Whatever measures of pacification you may have imagined in your wisdom, you cannot but perceive that as they have been preceded by an act of severity, they will be scrupulously examined by all whom they affect.

“The new laws imposed upon the republic (for how can you hope that a people surrounded by bayonets, will apply the term *mediators* to armed legislators?) will be proposed to the general council, or else simply promulgated.

“In the latter supposition, will any Genevese citizen, no matter to what party he belongs, consider those laws binding which have been forcibly dictated to him? Any code prepared under your inspection will, I am convinced, be equitable and paternal; but such code will be drawn up by peace-makers so foreign to the constitution of the country for which they are legislating, that very little hope can be entertained of the Representatives doing them justice—and if the effects of prejudice are subversive of reason, it cannot be denied that, on the present occasion, the people of Geneva are justified in being at least suspicious. On the other hand, the Negatives, to whom you could never grant sufficient in their own opinion, and who are clever adepts at artifice, reliance, and temporising, will no doubt seem to acquiesce, but will resume the right of again troubling, at the very first opportunity, the political arrangements that give a new constitution to Geneva.

Shall the constitution on the contrary have an entirely aristocratic foundation? It appears to me very rash to calculate for this upon the consent of the nation, the majority of whom will be injured in their pretensions if not in their most valued rights; and nothing is more probable than the refusal of two thirds of the general council to give it their sanction.

“‘We will do without their consent,’ you may say. No doubt, you may easily dispense with their sanction;

but the foreign powers will use this as a fresh argument to persuade the Representatives, as they have tried to do ever since the troops entered Geneva, that the total abolition of the council general, and even of its phantom, is the first clause in the treaty that will be dictated by the aristocrats to their fellow-citizens, through the medium of the guaranteeing powers. The law of the strongest is a law of nations which you must not expect to see respected except by the weakest. A garrison sufficiently numerous to be feared would exceed the forces of this republic, which, besides, would be deserted the very moment such a help became necessary to its government. Now, either the French troops will never quit Geneva, or the nation will soon convince these aristocrats that a government without strength has no other rampart than public opinion and confidence. Shall the cabinet of Versailles, which you have endowed with a reputation for wisdom and moderation, which perhaps is the only kind of glory worthy the ambition of a French King,—be constantly agitated by the quarrels of mechanics, the uneasiness of the neighbours of Geneva, the clamours—too natural alas!—of an ant-hill which an elephant does not disdain to crush? A canal to join the Saone to the Loire would cost only five millions of livres: I doubt that this is twice the amount already absorbed by the expedition to Geneva. The ingenious Perache did not require much more to conquer from the Rhone and

the Saone the site of a great city. Will the Genevese aristocrats ever offer objects of such utility in exchange for the millions of their august protector, who certainly cannot doubt his power over Geneva any day he thinks proper to use it? What a futile occupation for a minister full of great views, and exercising his high duties, is the reconciling of parties which have come into such strong collision for no other reason than because one of them relies upon your support!

“Yes! I swear by my honour and by your glory, upon which our national consideration now depends,—by that glory which the most complete success at Geneva cannot exalt, and the apparent or real oppression of that interesting republic will tarnish for ever,—that the hostile factions would never have ventured to commit the scandalous excesses which you considered yourself bound to repress, if you had prescribed peace equally to both parties, and especially if you had commanded that the peace should originate with themselves. It is by ascribing importance to these dissensions that the French government has really rendered them important. When the aristocrats were convinced that at a certain period, armed with all the authority of the King of France, you would interfere in the affairs of their country, they hastened to reach and to push their opponents towards that period.

“Perhaps—and allow me to say this to you—

perhaps if you had appeared only invested with the personal consideration you enjoy, and as the minister of a great sovereign (and were not these two things sufficient to render you all-powerful at Geneva?)—perhaps if you had whispered to the aristocrats that the fault of the governors is too often that of the governed ; that the magistrates of a free people are always culpable when they disdain the esteem and confidence of that people, and even when they do not obtain it ;—perhaps the sole accents of your voice, of your profound and discreet reason, would have appeased the Genevese, and put an end to their dissensions Fate has not willed this, but still the case is not desperate.

“ Permit me, animated as I am with a pure zeal which encourages me, and convinces me that this letter cannot displease you—permit me to state to you, with sincerity, and with the familiarity of a sincere friend of truth and humanity, all that strikes me in this matter. My opinion is not to be despised, for I have seen that which you cannot see.

“ The King of France has made himself appear to the Genevese as a severe and angry parent. If his arm drops the deadly weapon he now holds, he will appear only as a father in the eyes of the nations which are observing him with alarm. Recall the French troops ; they are not necessary to keep mechanics in awe, who, even in the excess of their indignation

and despair, have not dared to strike a single French soldier. The ruin of these mechanics is so inevitable, if the troubles and tumult of civil dissensions should continue, that their sole object is to impart to the constitution, and to the government proceeding from it, a permanency which would render it unnecessary ever after to retouch, or even to revise either. Recal these troops, in which the citizen of Geneva, accustomed to other ideas and other customs, sees only instruments of tyranny, destined to violate his thoughts even at the bottom of his soul ;—send back to Geneva those men in whom the citizens have confidence, and the proscription of whom maintains among the Genevese a sense of the injustice they accuse us of. The good faith of these men, and their simple, modest, and indulgent patriotism, would surprise you, misunderstood as they are, in consequence of the storms which have carried them far beyond their own measures. Their integrity is such that their persecutors never dared attempt to seduce them ; and calumny has never been able to allege against them a single fact that would raise a blush upon their cheeks. Become, then, their benefactor ; let them owe to you their restoration to their country. Their adherents will be just as blind without them, and will even falter in pursuing the right path. The great numbers of the fellow-citizens of these exiles who go to console them, risking, by any display of sympathy towards them, the displeasure of the Court

of France, shows the esteem and confidence which they enjoy. When measures of peace have prepared the way for the return of concord, say to the Genevese—

“ ‘ You have, all of you, been stricken with vertigo, and it was for the security of your liberty itself that we thought it necessary to tie your hands for an instant. The moment of your delirium is over; adversity has opened your eyes. Your magistrates no doubt mourn with their fellow-citizens; if they did not, they would be unworthy of the protection of a great King. The citizens have tasted of the bitter fruits produced by a tumultuous confederacy, and have been severely punished. Blind as ye are, bear in mind that man can do nothing except by numbers; that he is strong by union only, and happy only by peace. The most powerful of monarchs is yet not powerful enough to bring back peace among you, if it has not returned to your hearts. **NEGATIVES!** you are indebted to us for your safety and your freedom—respect those of your brethren. We restore to you, **REPRESENTATIVES**, those whom you termed your chiefs, but who shall be so no longer. To you, **MAGISTRATES**, we restore those fellow-citizens whose good intentions and misfortunes alone you must now remember. We restore to all of you your rights as citizens. Far from you be those demonstrations invented by discord and hatred! Let there be no longer at Geneva any other party save

that of the country. You are all brothers ; unite as such, and cement your union by those domestic arrangements which foreigners cannot anticipate, and therefore cannot prescribe. Do not forget that these troubles have arisen in your country because it has never possessed any efficient means, within itself, of putting an end to its civil dissensions. Draw these means from your own constitution ; seek for peace and the preservation of your reciprocal rights in your dependence upon the law, and in the necessity of a mutual confidence. The troops shall leave you ; as you now know whether you are inaccessible or not, and can escape from their power. Go and try to render their presence for ever unnecessary ; and swear that you will spurn from among you the parricide who shall dare to murmur at the family compact which you are about freely to subscribe.'

" Impart to these few words all the dignity and effect which you have so many means of doing, and you will see the Genevese resume their friendly conferences, and, with much docility and gratitude, appoint commissioners from both parties. To facilitate this reconciliation, to give confidence to all parties, and to strike them with awe, let the plenipotentiaries preside at these conferences ; all will then proceed smoothly, and every one will agree, without your being obliged to trouble yourself with details that will give to ambitious men and their friends the power of

deceiving you, and who cannot but tire to no purpose an administration whose time is valuable and its surcharge of business excessive.

“ There will then be no emigrations to fear, no more complaints, no more calumnies, no more secret imputations of a not very magnanimous abuse by the French government of an authority which ought to be tutelary and not oppressive. Such accusations, which delude the public, often badly informed, but who reign despotically by opinion, and triumph over every known authority—such accusations, I say, always echoed by the public, affect fame, sharpen national hatred, and may hand down to the censure of posterity both the minister and the sovereign who had deserved the gratitude of their nation, of Europe, and of the age in which they lived. The French refugees stained the laurels of the most imposing of our monarchs, and perhaps forged the thunderbolts with which he was stricken towards the close of his life.

“ Such a misfortune will not happen to our august King. He knows too well that true power is moderation—that rectitude is dignity—that oppression is baseness—that justice is honour. . He knows that a giant requires not stilts to appear tall. Half the globe will soon be indebted to him for freedom; and he will soon give to Europe a noble, lasting, and salutary peace. O, you who are associated to his glory!—to that glory which monarchs so rarely obtain,—you,

revered moderator of a great empire, whose real success will be a source of congratulation to the whole human race, upon whom the faults of your predecessors have borne too heavily and for too long a period!—do not disdain to protect the liberties of a handful of men lately free, and worthy, I dare to assure you, of being so. Their salvation or their ruin is in your hands; and may the liberator of America never be termed the destroyer of Geneva! ”

We trust that this document, hitherto unpublished, will do honour to Mirabeau's memory. The reader will appreciate this generous and philanthropic effort in favour of an oppressed people, when he is reminded that it was amid domestic tribulations and anxieties that Mirabeau spontaneously came forward, not before the public, but before the supreme authority of the state, as the advocate of liberal political principles, and the apostle of freedom.

The letters written by Mirabeau to Chamfort * are the only public documents that exist concerning the

* Published at Paris, year V. Sebastien Roch Nicholas Chamfort was born in 1741 near Clermont in Auvergne. His “Eloges de Molière et de la Fontaine,” and three dramatic pieces—“La Jeune Indienne,” “Le Marchand de Smyrne,” and “Mustapha et Zeangir,” raised him into repute, which, however, seems to have since declined. In 1781 he was elected a member of the French Academy. He died in 1794.

period immediately following the unsuccessful appeal from the decree of separation rendered at Aix, July 5th 1783. No interesting facts are found in this correspondence, which appears to have been but little noticed by the public*, although several letters, really worthy of Mirabeau's genius, display to great advantage the skill of the writer, the sagacity of the philosopher, and the learning of the civilian. It is true that, with reference to facts, few are to be found except insignificant details concerning Mirabeau's pecuniary difficulties; the works which he thought likely to bring him funds; his plans and attempts; his hopes and disappointments; and lastly, concerning the incidents of an obscure affair of gallantry, in which the interests of Chamfort were stipulated by Mirabeau, not a very effective agent in such a matter. These letters contain, besides, some obscure and entangled metaphysical theses, and much praise and flattery, so stilted that we may be permitted to doubt their sincerity, though the editor† appears to have taken them

* We have no knowledge of any reprint of these letters during the last thirty-eight years.

† Pierre Louis Ginguené, a literary man and a periodical writer, in 1791, in the "*La Feuille Villageoise*;" then in the "*Decade Philosophique*;" and lastly in the "*Mercure de France*." He is the author of "*Fables, Epigrams, and other Poems*;" also of a great and beautiful work entitled "*Literary History of Italy*," and numerous articles in the "*Biographie Universelle*." He likewise edited the works of the poet P. D. E. Lebrun, those of Chamfort, &c. He

in a serious light. Indeed this seems to have been his principal motive for publishing these letters; and his extreme admiration of Chamfort led him to suppose that, in this writer, Mirabeau acknowledged "great superiority" over himself, and spoke to him "as a disciple to his master."

We shall not assuredly discuss this strange assertion, for posterity has already settled the question, by placing Mirabeau and Chamfort in very different ranks.

Neither shall we give an analysis of these letters, because, in the first place, they will scarcely bear analysing, and in the next, they are not of sufficient importance to fix the attention of our readers. We shall merely state here that the editor placed after the letters a "Summary of the German Dissertation on the causes of the universality of the French Language, which shared the prize of the Berlin Academy*."

was successively a member of the Committee of Public Instruction, Ambassador from France to the King of Sardinia, and a tribune. He was also member of the Institute. Ginguené was born at Rennes in 1748, and died at Paris, November 17th 1816.

* Forty-six pages 8vo. This prize was given, in 1784, jointly to Rivarol and to the author of the dissertation of which Mirabeau wrote a summary. This author is not named in any of the works we have consulted, nor in Mirabeau's manuscript, which states only that "the dissertation was read at the public meeting at Berlin by M. Mérian:" no doubt the learned and ingenious philosopher Jean Bernard Mérian, Director of the Class of Belles-Lettres at the Academy of Berlin. He was born September 28th 1723, and died February 12th 1807.

This "summary" is an extract by Mirabeau, or at least revised by him, if we may judge from the manuscript, which is full of corrections in his handwriting. The extract, however, is substantial, interesting, and curious; it is also very remarkable in style and method. We shall, however, say nothing more of it, because it is only a simple analysis, a work of patience, a mere study, and not a composition of Mirabeau's.

Though it appears unnecessary in this place to dwell upon the "Letters to Chamfort," we shall nevertheless take from them, as well as from our own materials, some particulars concerning Mirabeau's residence in England, whither he went in August 1784.

Two reasons induced him to go thither: one was the fear of being arrested in consequence of his furtive and rash publication of his *Case in Cassation*, or rather of the sort of preface he had written to it, which, we have already stated, was calculated to give offence to the Keeper of the Seals; the other was the necessity of completing the materials for his "*Considerations on the order of Cincinnatus*," a work we shall soon have occasion to mention.

Mirabeau took with him on this journey, the infant we have already mentioned in the preface to this work, and at the end of Book XIII, Vol. III. He loved this child, then two years old, with extreme affection, and it remained with him until his death. He was also accompanied by a young female whom he had attached

to his fate, and of whom we are bound to say a few words.

We must premise that this connexion, though irregular, was not a public scandal like the former *liaison*; and in spite of the situation in which the young woman was placed, she never ceased to command the respect and affection of all who knew her: a just reward for the exquisite qualities with which she contrived to cover the only blemish that could be imputed to her. To this we may add that she inspired Mirabeau with an attachment of a nature very different from, and much more durable than, any former connexion of a similar description.

Henrietta Amelia, born May 15th 1765, was a natural daughter of Onno Zwier Van Haren*, who acquired great renown in Holland by the ability he displayed in the highest public employments, and by his great talents, in history and high literature. At fourteen years of age, she lost her excellent father, and having only a very small annuity to live upon, the interesting orphan was placed as a boarder in a convent at Paris. Here Mirabeau became acquainted with her about the beginning of 1784. She had no relations, no friends, no experience, and no power of defence. Subdued by the pity with which Mirabeau's misfortunes inspired her, and seduced by the magic of his

* Born at Leeuwarden (Friesland) in 1713, and died at Amsterdam in 1779.

language, she united herself to him, consented to follow him, and for several years strongly fixed him by her beauty, her good sense, and the power of a virtue the more touching because a single fault rendered her as modest as she was gentle and shrinking,—as well as by the truly maternal care she bestowed upon the child beloved by Mirabeau, and which she had adopted as her own*.

Accustomed to meet with all sorts of accidents in his travels, Mirabeau was nearly lost in crossing the Channel†. Shortly after his arrival, he gave an account of his impressions in a letter, part of which we insert

* Henrietta Amelia is always mentioned under the name of Madame de Nehra, an anagram of the name of Haren. Mirabeau, in his posthumous letters, has alluded only once or twice to Madame de Nehra, whom we mention because several public events are connected with her name; and as we shall make her known by quotations from unpublished documents only, we think it right to insert here a few words concerning her in the "Letters to Chamfort."

"I have a companion of my fate, amiable, mild and good, and whose beauty would infallibly have rendered her rich, if her excellent moral qualities had not withheld her." (p. 76.) "My companion is, as you have seen her, beautiful, mild, good, even-tempered, full of courage and of that charm of sensibility which makes every thing bearable, even the evils it produces." (p. 87.) "You shall see her angelic countenance, her penetrating gentleness, the magic fascination that surrounds her." (p. 91.) "I swear to you, my friend, in all the sincerity of my soul, that I am not worthy of her, and that her mind is of a superior cast, in tenderness, delicacy, and goodness." (p. 92.)

† Letters to Chamfort, p. 48.

here, because in it will be found the subjects that usually occupied his thoughts.

“The approaches to London are of a rustic beauty of which not even Holland has furnished models (I should rather compare them to some valley in Switzerland); for—and this very remarkable fact immediately catches an experienced eye—this domineering people are, beyond every thing, agriculturists in their island; and it is this that has so long saved them from their own delirium. I felt my heart strongly and deeply moved as I passed through this highly cultivated and prosperous land, and I said to myself—‘Wherefore this emotion so new to me?’ These country-seats compared with ours are mere country boxes. Several parts of France, even in the worst of its provinces, and all Normandy, through which I have just passed, are assuredly more beautiful in natural scenery than this country. There are to be found here and there in France, especially in our own province, noble edifices, splendid establishments, immense public works, vast traces of the most prodigious efforts of man; and yet here I am delighted much more than I was ever surprised in my own country, by the things I have mentioned. It is because here nature is improved and not forced; it is because these roads, narrow but excellent, do not remind me of forced or average labour, except to lament over the country in which such labour is known; it is because this admirable state

of cultivation shows me the respect paid to property; it is because this care, this universal cleanliness is a speaking symptom of welfare; it is because all this rural wealth is in nature, near to nature, and according to nature, and does not, like splendid palaces surrounded with hovels, betray the excessive inequality of fortunes, which is the source of so many evils; it is because all tells me that here the people are something—that every man enjoys the development and free exercise of his faculties, and that I am in another order of things*.”

We insert also another passage, in which again appears the man continually pre-occupied with the interests of freedom; and we give this extract the more readily because, on the one hand, the letters to Chamfort are, as we have already said, very little known, and on the other, because Mirabeau's precarious and painful situation in England prevented him from writing, according to his first intention, the observations which the British constitution naturally suggested to a mind like his.

“I am not an enthusiast in favour of England, and I now know sufficient of that country to tell you that if its constitution is the best known, the application of this constitution is the worst possible†; and that if

* Letters from Mirabeau to Chamfort, pp. 50, 51.

† In 1778, Mirabeau wrote: “When will the English perceive that the systems introduced into the councils of their court have

the Englishman is, as a social man, the most free in the world, the English people are the least free of any *.

* * * * * What then is freedom, since the small portion of it found in one or two laws, places in the first rank a nation so little favoured by nature? What may a constitution not effect, when this one, though incomplete and defective, saves and will save for some time to come the most corrupt people in the universe from their own corruption†? How great must be the influence of a small number of data favourable to the human species since this people—ignorant, superstitious, obstinate (for they are all this), covetous, and very near to Punic faith, are better than most other nations,

prodigiously advanced in their country the work of despotism? How badly applied in practice is the beautiful theory of their government! And how ill-composed, and ill-combined are the parties constituting their legislative assemblies!" — *Lettres de Cachet*, vol. i. p. 232.

* Letters to Chamfort, p. 69.

† Eighteen months previously, Mirabeau wrote in a work never published, but which afforded us some extracts added to our account of the suit for a separation carried on at Aix in 1783,—we allude to the "Letters addressed to a former Magistrate concerning the suit between the Count and Countess of Mirabeau."

"Will England be adduced as an objection? But that State is constituted! The English have a country!—and this is the reason why the people the most fanatic, the most ignorant and the most corrupt in the whole world, have a public spirit, civic virtues, and incredible success, even in the midst of their delirium. This is the reason why, despite of nature, they have assumed the first rank among nations!"

known, because they enjoy a small portion of civil liberty*.”

In the beginning of February 1785, Madame de Nehra left London for Paris, in order to make preparations for her friend's return thither. Mirabeau wrote to her frequently, and we here transcribe one of his letters, because it contains an interesting fact, and places his character in a most favourable light; for he assuredly could never have guessed that his letter would be published.

“The day after your departure, my kind friend, I had a serious alarm which has not diminished my just melancholy. It was thought that the plague was in London, and you may well suppose that I blessed Providence for your departure! But judge to what agony I saw you exposed, if this dreadful scourge, let loose here, intercepted all correspondence with the rest of the world, and left your friend amid devastation

* Letters to Chamfort, p. 69. In reference to the imperfections of the British constitution, and especially to the abuses and inefficiency of the national representation, Mirabeau says elsewhere,—

“A man must be an Englishman to have a right to speak against the English. It appears as if hitherto other nations were to be consoled by being talked to about the defects of the English constitution, and its abuses. This resembles those individuals wearing slight bonds who go and complain to slaves loaded with heavy chains. It is not considered that the bonds do not destroy any of the sensibility, whilst the chains destroy all feeling.”—“*Considerations on the Order of Cincinnatus*,” notes upon a writing by Dr. Price, p. 349.

and death, without your possessing any human means, I do not say of relieving him, but of knowing whether he still breathed, or whether he had perished. These dreadful fears, which had already driven several families suddenly into the country, fortunately subsided almost as soon as they were raised; but I spent a cruel day and a cruel night, not assuaged assuredly by the necessity of concealing from you the cause of my alarm. This was what gave rise to it. A woman seized with putrid fever attended with the most alarming symptoms, was taken to one of the hospitals, where, in the course of the day, the disease carried off three other patients, and the surgeon who attended them. A guard was immediately sent to the hospital, and it was in contemplation to wall up the ward, and place a cordon of troops round the building. This was sufficient to fill the whole city with dread, and to rouse into activity the thieves with which it swarms. Fortunately there were no deaths on the following day, at least in the suspected ward, and the alarm began to subside. Thus I had, as you perceive, a pretence for following you very closely; but, besides that the plague is not, in my mind, the greatest of dangers, far from it—how could I have deserted a country smitten with so dreadful a calamity? I know that, being neither a public man nor an Englishman, I was by no means bound to consider Great Britain my post, although circumstances had stationed me there at such a juncture. But

I fear this is rather an evasion than a reason. I am not an Englishman, but I am a man; and whoever loses not his presence of mind is always a public man on a day of calamity. Besides, Elliot * is so much my brother, I owe him a devotedness so entire and affectionate, and he would have found himself in such a state of embarrassment, being the only man in his family, which is surcharged with women and children, that I should never have had the courage to desert him †."

The real object of Madame de Nehra's journey was to ascertain whether it was true, as Mirabeau had been informed, that he might return to Paris without any ground of apprehension for his safety. But calumny had been busy with him during his absence: the public authorities were persuaded that he had gone to England to write a work against themselves. They supposed that he was anxious to return merely to complete his materials, and clandestinely prepare his work for publication. Madame de Nehra had therefore strong grounds for personal alarm, which she commu-

* Sir Gilbert Elliot, afterwards Earl of Minto, born April 23rd 1751, Governor of Corsica in 1794, Ambassador at Vienna in 1799, and Governor-general of India in 1807. The Earl of Minto died June 21st 1814. He had been Mirabeau's schoolfellow at the Abbé Choquart's, and ever after held the first rank among Mirabeau's most constant, most useful, and most illustrious friends.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame de Nehra, dated March 8th 1783.

nicated to her friend, and in reply to her letter on this occasion, he wrote the following :—

“ I did not receive your terrible letter till to-day, and should have immediately set out for Paris, if Elliot had not opposed it with the most affectionate instances. Yet he brought me to his way of thinking only by convincing me that it was very important we should not both at once run the same risks. He had great difficulty in bringing me to his opinion, although his entreaties were attended with the most affectionate and most touching interest, independently of my concern for his situation—for he is very ill. I would at first listen to nothing ; my head was full of your danger and embarrassments. But at length the probability of my hearing from you to-morrow ; the remark, true enough, that your third letter, though it reached me before your second, but was written subsequently, was in a somewhat calmer strain ; and the certainty that at this moment I should rather increase than diminish your danger, have forced from me the promise not to stir until I hear further from you. But, good God !—what a state of anxiety I am in ! What a fate is mine ! Who could have foreseen—who would not have been horror-stricken at the idea, that the most absurd of calumnies would have armed against me so many enemies, and have cooled so many pretended friends ? I, in London for the purpose of writing against my country !—and because you assert the contrary, you have to fear an

act of authority! Really, my sweet friend, it is impossible to get rid of my alarm when so closely connected with the object of my affection; otherwise I should deem very absurd the fears with which you have been inspired, perhaps to detach you from me and sever our connexion Yet, great God! if these fears were well founded—if those wicked people should not even require a pretence—if the hatred of my enemies were to bear upon you alone!—the very thought drives me mad. Do not remain a moment at Paris. What is the world's opinion to me, compared with your safety? What care I about the approbation of pretended friends, who may waver and doubt instead of freeing you from the weight of embarrassment under which you may be crushed? Of what value in my estimation is any interest compared with the happiness of seeing you? Set out and come hither to a free country, and, in the bosom of friendship, brave both calumniators and tyrants. My gentle friend, my attachment for you cannot increase, but how should my gratitude not increase when your heroism, at so tender an age, inspires every body with admiration? Your letter has made all who have read it shed tears * * * * *.

“ You had resolved to go to Versailles. What have you done there?—how were you received? What a worry for your mind!—what a place for your simplicity! How little has nature qualified you or me

for such a place!—you who are so gentle and yet so proud—I, who, though kind-hearted, am so intractable when I encounter haughtiness and duplicity, stupidity and despotism;—and both of us so wedded to domestic happiness and peaceful enjoyments*.”

This state of uneasiness lasted some time longer, and occasioned several other letters upon these same subjects, which we refrain from transcribing, as they would occupy too much space.

Mirabeau, tired of waiting for a formal permission, ventured to return to France†, whither we shall follow him as soon as we have given a summary account of the works which occupied him in London during a residence of six months in that city.

We have stated that Mirabeau took with him to London, in a state of great progress, the work which appeared September 20th 1784, under the title of “Considerations upon the Order of Cincinnatus‡.”

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame de Nehra, dated March 10th 1785.

† He reached Paris the 27th March, before he could have known anything of a letter written on the 24th by the Baron de Breteuil, and which Peuchet, who publishes everything, has inserted in his work, vol. ii. p. 315.

‡ “Or, Imitation of an Anglo-American pamphlet,” by the Count of Mirabeau; followed by several documents relative to this institution; by a letter from General Washington, accompanied with remarks by the French author; by a letter from the late M. Turgot, Minister of State in France, to Dr. Price, on the American laws; and by a translation of a pamphlet by Dr. Price, entitled “Obser-

licers, was formed under the name of "Association of the Cincinnati*," and an external badge was conferred, in order, as it was said, to perpetuate the remembrance of the war of independence. This species of order of knighthood, rendered hereditary by its first statutes, formed a strange contrast with the events and results which it purported to commemorate. Some Americans considered it dangerous to liberty, and calculated to change republican institutions in their very origin, by introducing into them the element of a titled aristocracy. A pamphlet on

then detained in the donjon of Vincennes. This is what he wrote on the subject:—

"The sublime manifesto of the United States of America has been generally applauded. God forbid that I should protest against the public opinion on this subject—I who, were I not in prison, would go to them, to learn from as well as to fight for them. But I would ask, whether the powers which have contracted alliances with them—and this especially applies to France, their principal ally—have dared to read this manifesto, and to interrogate their consciences after having read it? I would ask if, at this time, there is a government in Europe, the Swiss and Dutch Confederacies, and the British Isles alone excepted, which, were it judged according to the declaration of the Congress made 4th July 1776, would not be deprived of its power? I would ask whether, of the thirty-two Kings of the third race of our monarchs, more than two-thirds have not been much more guilty towards their subjects, than the Kings of Great Britain have been towards the British Colonies?"—*Lettres de Cachet*, vol. i. p. 284.

* This was an allusion to the retirement of Washington, who, on resigning the command of the Republican armies, withdrew to Virginia, where he cultivated his estate.

the subject was published in America; Mirabeau, at the request of Dr. Franklin, undertook to translate it. It may easily be supposed that he would gladly have performed the task even without such a request, if we may judge from his previous opinions, and from what he says concerning the object of his work.

“Such a subject is one of inspiration, especially when the writer exposes a theory which is almost his own, and the practice of which has directed and constituted his whole life. It is, however, a curious and remarkable thing that philosophy and freedom have raised their heads in the middle of Paris to warn the New World of the perils of servitude, and point out to it from afar the dangers that threaten its posterity. Never did eloquence defend a more noble cause. Perhaps a corrupt people may enlighten a new people. Instructed by their own evils, they may teach others to avoid such evils, and servitude itself may prove useful by becoming the school of freedom*.”

Mirabeau had prepared this work at Paris; but he increased it in England by a translation of the “Observations” by Dr. Price, a respectable English economist and civilian, “On the Importance of the American Revolution, and the Means of making it a Benefit to the World;” also by reflections which, it seems, were principally written by the celebrated advocate Target†; by a letter, in which, in 1778,

* Letters to Chamfort, p. 29.

† Ibid. p. 81.

Target had expressed his opinion on the defects of the American constitution * ; and by another letter written by Dr. Price, with a similar intention.

This work has fallen into a species of oblivion, which may be accounted for not only by the ephemeral and limited nature of the subject, but likewise by the manner in which the author has treated it, and by the incoherence of several pieces that he incorporated with it, an addition since attributed to a desire of increasing the size of the volume, in order that it might fetch a higher price †.

* Mirabeau's enemies did not fail to detract from the merit of his work by representing it to be a servile and literal translation. Two years later, he publicly defended himself, in the following terms, against this unjust imputation.

"I have stated my book upon the Cincinnati to be an imitation of an Anglo-American pamphlet. In my preface I mention the sheet of this Ædamus Burke, who, it is said, claims my work. And if those who now quote it, had only read it, they would have understood that they could not very easily succeed in making a thick volume, twice translated into English (in London and in America), and about to be published in German, pass for a translation of sixteen octavo or twenty-four duodecimo pages; for the very estimable pamphlet of Ædamus Burke has been published in both these forms. However, and not to appear more modest than I am, I confess that if I could translate so, I should do nothing but translate."—*Introduction to the paper on Moses Mendelssohn, and the political reform of the Jews*, p. 3, note.

† Whatever judgment the public may have pronounced upon this book, we have proof that Mirabeau was not dissatisfied with it himself. This is what he says in his Letters to Mauvillon, an enlightened and severe critic.

"I confess that I set some value upon my ' Considerations on the

The original work was only a small pamphlet, long enough perhaps for the discussion of a passing political question. Mirabeau, who has spun it out to a volume, could succeed in doing so only by forced developments, which he had no other means of effecting than by exaggerating beyond measure his objections, and supposing that the sharing of a few ribands and medals among the heroic founders of a great republic, would overthrow it the very day after its foundation; and this too by causes of ruin which generally arise only during the lengthened progress of time, the forgetfulness of principles, the desuetude of the laws, the alteration of institutions, and the corruption of morals.

Hence, we confess with regret, have arisen prolixity and repetitions, declamation and injustice, and the

Order of Cincinnatus.' It appears to me that, in this work, there is good philosophical feeling, and good oratory; the part relating to the decorated patriciate seems to me new; and I cannot but think that the subject has been examined in all its bearings. It is, of all I ever wrote, that with which I am the least dissatisfied." (p. 28.)

It has been asserted by several writers, and among others by Ginguéné, the editor of Mirabeau's *Letters to Chamfort* (note, p. 39), that Chamfort wrote a considerable part of the "Considerations upon the Order of Cincinnatus," and especially "the most brilliant parts." This assertion is wholly untrue, and proves very little acquaintance with the style of either of these two writers. To any person free from prejudice, who will read the work with attention, it would be as difficult to discover the least traces of Chamfort's style, as it is easy to recognise that of Mirabeau, who is one among the few distinguished writers that take little trouble to vary their style and manner.

fault of not proving any thing by attempting to prove too much.

Some short time before his departure from London, Mirabeau published another work, suggested to him by particular circumstances.

One of the stipulations in the treaty of Munster (1648), secured to Holland the monopoly of the navigation of the mouths of the Scheldt. Vessels entering from the sea, could not, in ascending that river, pass the assumed boundary line that crossed it from the points corresponding with the frontiers separating the United Provinces from the Low Countries, which latter then belonged to Austria. The same line also formed the limits at which all boats coming from the interior of the continent—that is to say, from the Low Countries—were to stop in descending the Scheldt.

In 1784, the Emperor of Austria, Joseph II, began by claiming the abolition of this monopoly, the legitimate possession of which did not appear to him sufficiently established by time,—a species of title which the innovating monarch held in but slight account. He soon afterwards proclaimed the freedom of the Scheldt, and announced that he should consider any opposition or resistance by the Dutch, a declaration of war. The Dutch, justified by possession during a century and half, excited by the interests of their vast trade, perhaps even of their political existence, and encouraged

by the secret support of France and England, loudly declared their refusal to admit the claim, and made vast preparations for defending their right. A great collision therefore appeared imminent between the two powers and their respective allies.

The struggle fortunately took place only between two celebrated writers, who on this occasion appeared to have changed sides. Linguet*, the avowed supporter of despotism, declared for the Emperor Joseph II, who appeared to be defending the general interest of all against the private interests of a few. Mirabeau, the apostle of freedom, maintained a contrary proposition, that is to say, he supported the cause of the Dutch. Although, from feeling and principle, he was favourable to the most complete system of commercial freedom, nevertheless, on the present occasion, he defended a treaty of restriction, the original motive of which arose perhaps more from prudential considerations than from any selfish calculation of exclusive benefit. To avoid the imputation of inconsistency

* Peuchet, in speaking of this controversy, makes a singular blunder: he supposes, vol. ii. p. 329, that Linguet replied to Mirabeau, whereas it was Mirabeau who replied to Linguet. The same mistake seems to have been made in page 162, No. 5, of the "*Révue de Paris*," where the writer says that Mirabeau was beaten by Linguet, an expression by no means clear, when it is considered, 1st, That Linguet's reply, supposing he ever wrote one, has never been quoted; 2nd, That the wish expressed by Mirabeau, and advocated by him, was realised almost immediately after his publication.

and deserting his favourite theories, he attempted to prove a fact, the consequences to be apprehended from which warranted an apparently less liberal system of policy. This fact was, that a coalition of the Northern powers existed to weaken and afterwards subdue those of the South. He undertook to prove that the freedom of the mouths of the Scheldt was one of the means of success which would best second the plans of the Northern league, by ruining Holland, and thus depriving the South of one of its most useful ramparts. Hence he inferred that bold and decisive measures, and even a partial war, would have the advantage of settling the question before the political knot had become so intricate that it was impossible to untie it, and of preventing a general conflagration among the powers interested.

Such was the subject of the work which Mirabeau published December 28th 1784, entitled: "Doubts on the freedom of the Scheldt claimed by the Emperor; and on the probable Causes and Consequences of this claim. By the Count of Mirabeau *."

It is not necessary to dwell any longer upon this work. It is well known that the event was conformable to Mirabeau's views, that is to say, that Joseph II gave up his pretensions on condition that Holland

* London, 8vo, 168 pages, with an Appendix of 40 pages. It bore this epigraph: *Bellum jure gentium perpetuæ pacis causa movetur.* Gravina de Orig. Jur. Civ. 11, 14.

should pay the expenses of his preparations. We are assuredly far from supposing that Mirabeau's pamphlet had any influence in producing this result. We do not even think that it increased his reputation as a political writer, or that he derived any other advantage from it than the few pounds which his publisher paid for it, and which his extreme poverty rendered very acceptable. But whatever may be the blemishes of this hasty production, from its want of method and precision, and its bloated style, it certainly does honour to Mirabeau's memory, by giving further proof of his courageous philanthropy and political sagacity.

Several biographers, with reference to the "Considerations on the Order of Cincinnatus," and the "Doubts on the Freedom of the Scheldt," have imputed to Mirabeau motives of pecuniary interest which, as much and perhaps more than his political convictions, induced him to write at this period*. We readily admit that the fact is not unfounded. But ought not the censure to fall to the ground before this too certain fact, that Mirabeau was writing for his *actual bread*? He had neither estates, nor an-

* Peuchet speaks of "prolixity which appears to have no other object than the want of filling up a volume." (Vol. ii. p. 329.) Now, we may fairly ask whether such a reproach is not singular from a man who, all his life, has made up books from other books, and has published on Mirabeau's life, four volumes, entirely composed of documents before published, without the addition of a single new fact, or a single unpublished sentence?

nuities, nor offices, nor appointments, nor pension—not even his dotal pension, which was contested; in short, he had no income at all. Is it not evident that, under these circumstances, the fruits of his labour were the only means he possessed for providing food for himself and those dependent upon him? Who then, without injustice, can impute to him his literary labours as a crime, especially on considering that after his release from prison he wrote only upon matters of general interest; that, in most cases, he wrote under the excitement of real conviction; that in those instances where his conviction is doubtful, he lays down no propositions that, if they could be attacked, might not be ably defended and with good faith; and that, with the exception of his “Correspondence from Berlin,” of which we shall speak when the time comes, he never published a single thing really blameable, or bearing the remotest resemblance to the hideous rhapsodies which hunger tore from his pen in the donjon of Vincennes.

Although firmly resolved to avoid, as much as possible, bringing any portion of the *private life* into those parts of the present work devoted to the *public life*, we cannot terminate our account of Mirabeau's residence in England without refuting two calumnious assertions made by his principal biographer.

Peuchet, immediately after mentioning the “Doubts on the Freedom of the Scheldt,” fixes this period,

December 1784, as that of Sophie's death, though we have proved, in another place, that she died five years subsequently.

Speaking of this same period he also says : " Mirabeau experienced real grief at the loss of the young and interesting Countess of Nehra. The life of torment and necessity which she led during the three years she spent with him, her journey to England, and her troubles at Paris, brought her to the grave."—Vol. iii. p. 332.

Here again Peuchet invents when he is ignorant of facts ; and during three pages of declamatory lamentation he so manages his inventions, that they become calumnies. He concludes in these terms :—

" It is, then, true that Mirabeau was destined to cause the misfortune of every woman who repaid his passion with the most tender affection. They who sacrificed to him duty, fortune, peace and happiness, were the victims of their fatal attachment."

This is certainly a severe sentence, which has not been lost for Peuchet's successors, for we give the following paraphrase, which is even much more highly coloured than the original text :—

" At this period (1784) died the Countess of Nehra. Poverty, mental affliction, fatigue, her journeys from Paris, and uneasiness regarding the future, brought her to the grave. The destiny of this amiable woman is as painful to relate as that of the sensible and

unhappy Sophie. Does the reader not imagine that he is reading the tale of *THE VAMPIRE*? All the females who approach this species of Lord Ruthven, die of misery and of love. 'This man drags them without fear or remorse through shame and poverty, until the grave opens to receive them*.'

These sentences, and those which follow them, are no doubt very eloquent; but there is a very strong fact to oppose to them: Madame de Nehra did not die in 1784, but June 24th 1818; she thus outlived Mirabeau more than twenty-seven years. Though he was generally an inconstant lover, he was an affectionate and useful friend, and he never ceased to cherish this lady as fondly as she loved him. He left her 20,000 francs by his will, in which she was the second person named—the author of this work being the first.

The other fact mentioned by Peuchet†, and afterwards, on his authority, by the writer in the "*Revue de Paris*," relates to a copying clerk named Hardi, whom Mirabeau employed at Paris and sent for when in London.

Peuchet's account is both absurd and unfounded. We have a statement of the affair written by Madame de Nehra, which we do not publish on account of its length, though it is interesting and bears the imprint

* 1831. *Revue de Paris*, vol. xxiv. No. 3. March 20th, p. 162.

† Vol. ii. p. 318.

of truth. We shall reduce our explanation of this circumstance to as few words as possible.

Mirabeau, on leaving Paris, being uncertain as to what might occur to him, confided to Hardi some very secret papers, relating to himself, his mother, and other persons, especially some females whose names we are not called upon to mention, as they have been noticed by none of our predecessors. When, on Hardi's arrival, Mirabeau asked for his papers, they were not forthcoming, and he could not obtain even the slightest explanation. Alarmed at the idea of the possible, nay probable danger of a furtive publication which might be imputed to him as a crime, he consulted with his friends, including Sir Gilbert Elliot, all of whom advised an action at law, as the surest way of justifying himself by anticipation. Hardi was accordingly prosecuted by Mirabeau, and not Mirabeau by Hardi, as Peuchet states *, for the restitution of a deposit, and not for robbery. Sir Gilbert Elliot in person stated the case to the Court, adding the advice he had given to the complainant, and his own share in the transaction. Hardi was sent to prison, and formed so correct a judgment upon his own case, that he never ventured, at least then and openly, to utter a word of the recrimination asserted by Peuchet; though it is more than probable that, after such severe treatment, the thought of recrimination would naturally have occurred to his

* Vol. ii. p. 318.

mind, especially in a country the laws of which would have favoured such a defence.

This is the exact truth concerning a fact which Peuchet has so misrepresented as to disgrace Mirabeau's memory. But whence this animosity?—and how can such ignorance be accounted for? We seek not to explain the animosity, for we have never been able to discover its cause. The ignorance is easily accounted for, because Peuchet undertook to write Mirabeau's life without any knowledge of it, except from documents previously published. He could obtain no materials from Madame du Saillant, who refused him her confidence, more especially as the individual alone charged to justify Mirabeau's memory, and who now addresses the reader, was with her at the period of Peuchet's application. This biographer, however, bent upon writing a voluminous work, sought his materials from all sources, without care, judgment, or choice. With regard to the law proceedings between Mirabeau and Hardy, he took his version from a disgraceful libel published March 27th 1787, entitled “ Considerations on the ‘ Denunciation of Stock-jobbing,’ ” and from another pamphlet written by some pretended champion of Necker. The second of these libels is nothing more than a copy of the first, which was partly written under Hardy's dictation. We may add, that Peuchet did not examine this document throughout, which every judicious and candid biographer would

have rejected at a single glance, because the fury, exaggeration, and falsehood of hatred are stamped upon every sentence. We repeat, that Peuchet did not even read it with common attention, although he has translated several of its pages *, for otherwise it would have informed him that Madame de Nehra, whose death he states to have taken place in 1784, was still alive in 1787, as the libel in question speaks of her in most defamatory terms, as of a *living* person †.

Mirabeau, while in London, had conceived a hope of writing some great literary work which would have afforded him permanent means of subsistence. For instance, such an undertaking as that which we have already stated he had planned at Vincennes,—that is to say, a methodical series of extracts from the valuable but confused compilation entitled “Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres.” He had likewise imagined a work entitled “Le Conservateur,” which should contain a selection of pieces from old works, almost forgotten from the daily increase of new publications,—an increase then very sensible, but the progress of which has since been prodigious and incal-

* Vol. iii. pp. 98 to 102.

† Mirabeau was much affected at this libel, which he mentions in a letter to Mauvillon :—

“I want to prepare Madame de Nehra for the perusal of a horrible libel against myself, in which she is atrociously, gratuitously, and calumniously insulted. He for whom she suffers must at least console her.”—P. 224.

culable. These plans were at first listened to, but afterwards rejected by the timid London publishers, who seemed to have but little of the speculating spirit of their nation *. Mirabeau was therefore compelled to confine his labours to the two works he published there; and we know of no other written by him in London, and unpublished, except the beginning of a History of Geneva, the autograph manuscript of which we gave to the late M. Etienne Dumont † of Geneva, when he last visited Paris, in April 1826, and a sermon on the immortality of the soul, composed for a young refugee clergyman. This latter gentleman had been recommended from Geneva to Mirabeau, who drew him from poverty, not by pecuniary aid, which

* There is reason to believe that Mirabeau did not meet with more encouragement in his own country, if it be true (a fact we can neither affirm nor deny) that a prospectus was circulated at Paris, as is asserted in the "*Mémoires Secrets pour servir à l'Histoire de la Republique des Lettres.*" (London: John Adamson. Vol. xxxi. pp. 91, 93. February 10th and 11th 1786.

† Etienne Dumont, a native of Geneva, known principally by his translations of, and commentaries upon, the writings of Jeremy Bentham. Etienne Dumont was very intimate with Mirabeau in 1789, and wrote several political works for him. In 1831, a volume was published under the title of "*Recollections of Mirabeau,*" being a series of fragments and notes which Etienne Dumont had not intended for publication, at least in the state they were then in, and which he himself termed a simple sketch, a qualification the editor has preserved—not in the title-page, but in his Preface. We shall, hereafter, have occasion to notice these "*Recollections*" by Etienne Dumont. This excellent man, as able as he was learned and virtuous, died at Milan, September 28th 1829.

he had no means of affording, but by the gift of this sermon, by the aid of which the young priest obtained a lucrative appointment. We intend, at some future time, to publish, from the autograph manuscript, this eloquent production, which, both in subject and in form, is essentially different from the other writings of the author, and must in every respect do honour to his memory.

BOOK III.

MIRABEAU reached Paris April 1st 1785. It was his intention to retire into Provence with Madame de Nehra and their adopted child, there to give himself up entirely to the composition of a great historical work, the materials for which he had long since collected; and in the meantime to endeavour to obtain, by amicable means, or at least without publicity, some settlement regarding the payment of the pension originally settled upon him when he married, and which would suffice for his wants during his laborious retirement. His plan was not to appear in the world until he was ready to publish a serious and well matured work which might entitle him to expect that, with oblivion of the past, he should obtain distinction and a chance of being employed in the public affairs of the state.

This prudent and praiseworthy project was, however, overthrown by an unexpected incident. The boy whom Mirabeau had adopted, fell so dangerously ill that it

was impossible to remove him. Meanwhile Mirabeau, having been introduced by Clavière to the Genevese banker Panchaud, kept up a constant intercourse with both. Their conversation generally turned upon questions of finance, a subject Mirabeau had studied in England, and which, at this period, occupied the public attention. His active mind was soon excited by questions relating to this branch of public economy, and he at length gave up the idea of retiring to Mirabeau Castle*.

For some years past, the wants of the state, and

* This project, evidence of which is to be found in the family correspondence and in the memoirs written by Madame de Neht, is also proved by the following passage in the preface to the work entitled "De la Caisse d'Escompte."

"Tired of a life of trouble, and being sure that repose and quiet are the only pure and unalloyed gifts which Providence has granted to man †, I quitted proud Albion, a country, for any other person, more worthy of esteem and curiosity than of affection and regret, but in which I found the sincerest and most devoted of friends, and *was proceeding to the only residence in which fate has left me any rights*, when, as I passed through Paris, I learnt that new regulations were in preparation for the *Caisse d'Escompte*. I considered that this circumstance rendered a work necessary, in which the best principles upon the subject should be explained and rendered intelligible to every one, &c." Pp. 12, 13.

† This truth must be very striking; for it is to be found at the two poles of the human intellect, if I may thus express myself.

We read in Newton: *Quietem, rem prorsus substantialem*.

We read in La Fontaine:

Le repos, le repos, trésor si précieux,

Qu'on en fit autrefois le partage des Dieux. (Note by Mirabeau.)

especially the prodigious expenses of the war in favour of American independence, had compelled the government to have recourse to considerable loans. This species of investment of money had grown into especial favour, in a country where the passion for gain is allied to excessive exuberance of imagination. Operations of this description were therefore not confined to the wants of the state. Side by side with the public securities, and, we may add, to their injury, appeared those of several private establishments which had sprung up, and drew large sums of money from the metropolis as well as from the provinces. Such were the *Caisse d'Escompte*, the Bank of St. Charles, and the Water Company of Paris. The first and last of these establishments were evidently of public utility; the second by no means bore the same character; but all three led to immense banking operations, and absorbed by far the greatest portion of the capital required by a multitude of more useful objects and appliances.

The *Caisse d'Escompte*, founded by Turgot, in 1776, had rendered important services to trade, by increasing the quantity of specie and its circulation. The rapid increase of its operations had augmented the dividends assigned to the shares, and the price, if not the real value of the latter, had risen, first in an equal, and subsequently in a greater proportion, owing to the manœuvres of a most insane system of stock-jobbing. In September 1783, the *Caisse d'Escompte* experienced

some embarrassment in its payments, and a dangerous assistance was imprudently afforded to it by the government. The decree in council of the 23rd of the same month, made bills of exchange a legal tender in liquidation of the notes, the payment of which in specie experienced a temporary difficulty. A rapid and extensive discredit was the result of this law. M. de Calonne, a few days after he took office, met it by an able measure: an order in council, bearing date November 25th 1783, repaired the fault committed two months previously. The stock of the *Caisse d'Escompte* again rose rapidly, and was restored to its former value. Stock-jobbing again set its fangs upon the shares of this establishment*, and at the period our narrative has now reached, was at the climax of its activity.

The bank of St. Charles was instituted at Madrid, in 1782, by Cabarrus, afterwards finance minister to the King of Spain. Mirabeau justly observes †, it was surprising that in a country in which, with the exception of the momentary effects of a transient war, the precious metals from the New World were abundant, one of those

* The original price of the shares of the first creation was 3000 livres, and of the second creation 3500. Between November 23rd 1783, to May 8th 1785, the system of stock-jobbing had raised the shares to 8000 livres.

† These observations, the correctness of which is set off by the most striking and beautiful language, are developed in Chapter III of the work upon the *Caisse d'Escompte*, pp. 22, 23. They are quoted by Peuchet, vol. ii. pp. 348 and following.

establishments should be founded, which are necessary only in those states where specie is wanting. Besides this circumstance, of itself sufficient to make capitalists reflect, and besides certain suspicious similarities betwixt Law and Cabarrus, between *the system* and the bank of St. Charles, the latter being based upon imaginary profits arising from the trade of the Philippine Islands, as the former was upon the illusions of the Mississippi and Louisiana, prudent men ought to have hesitated to invest their money in an establishment belonging to a foreign country wholly independent of France, and having an absolute government ;—an establishment, in short, whose operations they could appreciate only upon simple hearsay, and by illusions, not reason. Stock-jobbing, however, seized upon the stock of the Spanish bank, the shares of which were more sought after in France than at Madrid. Their price was fixed in Spain according to that in France, and not in France according to that in Spain. The nominal value was only 500 francs, but they had already risen cent. per cent.

The Water Company of Paris had created shares in order to constitute its capital. Notwithstanding the evident utility of its purpose, and the skill with which it was conducted, it had at the outset committed some errors in calculation, whereby the shares, which originally cost 1200 livres, fell one-third. The government thought proper to assist this institution, by purchasing a hundred shares. This assistance appearing likely to

ensure a success originally doubtful, the shares rapidly rose, and stock-jobbing having monopolised them also, they rose to 4000 livres, and even beyond.

The operations of these three establishments at first occupied the attention of Mirabeau, who was constantly urged by some of his friends, anxious to obtain the benefit of his talents for controversial writing. These friends, being holders of much government stock, and having therefore an interest in overthrowing or abating all dangerous competition, suggested to him the idea of attacking the system of stock-jobbing, and exposing the public evils attendant upon it. They supplied him with the necessary materials; and they further hinted to the finance minister the advantage of obtaining the assistance of so powerful an auxiliary. Mirabeau was accordingly introduced to M. de Calonne, and it was partly in the interest and under the inspiration of that minister that he wrote his two first works on financial subjects.

In the course of five months he published five books on finance. I. On the *Caisse d'Escompte* * (May 8th 1785). In this work he speaks so much of those he intended should follow, that he would have exposed himself to a charge of inconsistency and versatility had he not written them. II. On the Bank of Spain, termed

* 8vo, 227 pages, with this epigraph :

Jam dabitur, jam, jam ; donec deceptus, et expes
Necquicquam fundo suspiret nummus in imo.

PERS. Sat. II. v. 50, 51.

the Bank of St. Charles (1785) *. III. Letter from the Count of Mirabeau to M. Le Couteulx de la Noraye, on the Bank of Spain, termed the Bank of St. Charles, and on the *Caisse d'Escompte* † (July 13th 1785). IV. On the Shares of the Water Company of Paris ‡. (October 2nd 1785). V. Reply to the Writer on behalf of the Directors of the Water Company of Paris § (December 10th 1785).

These several works, written with energy and often with violence, attacked the private interests of too many individuals not to arouse against the author much hatred, insult, and calumny. Imputations of ignorance were lavished upon him, but not one of his pretended mistakes was pointed out, nor one of his proofs controverted. He was likewise taxed with venality, and his

* 8vo, 320 pages, with the following epigraph :

Ploratur lachrymis amissa pecunia veris.

JUV.

† 8vo, 117 pages, with this epigraph :

Vos opibus junctos, conspirantesque tulisse.

CLAUDIAN.

‡ London, 8vo, 36 pages, with this epigraph :

Pauvres gens ! . . je les plains, car on a pour les fous

Plus de pitié que de courroux.

LA FONTAINE, Fab. 7. liv. 12.

§ Brussels, 8vo, 116 pages, with the following epigraph :

Egens, ignotus, inquires, dum occultis libellis cuique periculum facessit, mox odium apud omnes adeptus, dedit exemplum, quod secuti ex pauperibus divites, ex contemptis metuendi, perniciem aliis, ac postremum sibi invenère.

TACIT. Ann. l. i. c. 74.

accusers forgot that, in the interests of the government, which secretly encouraged but publicly disavowed him, and in those of a few bankers, ruined or having sustained serious losses, he was attacking and driving to despair opulent and powerful stock-jobbers, who would have paid him munificently for his silence, had he chosen to accept their money.

Nothing would be easier than to borrow from contemporary writers very ample explanations concerning Mirabeau's financial writings; and we could transcribe from these writings themselves, as well as from other publications of his, numerous extracts which would do the more honour to his patriotism and talents, as in the present day these casual productions, which were never republished, are very little known.

But this last consideration, the very oblivion into which these ephemeral questions have fallen, and our repugnance to extract from works already published, strengthen our determination to borrow nothing except from a source unknown to the public. In this we shall always persevere when the matters in our narrative can be treated with materials exclusively our own; especially when these materials effectually supply the place of works already published in Mirabeau's name, but which are not of an interest sufficiently permanent to render them worthy of republication. With reference then to these financial productions, we confine ourselves to the insertion, 1st, of some passages in a letter from Mira-

beau to his father, written three years subsequently; 2ndly, and as a rapid and substantial summary, entirely new, the first part of a bitter but eloquent letter written by Mirabeau, in January 1786, to M. de Calonne. This letter was written immediately on Mirabeau's arrival in Prussia; but the friends, to whom he forwarded it without keeping a copy, kept it back and would not publish it, notwithstanding the writer's urgent entreaties, attended with angry remonstrances, as is proved by his own letters and those of his friends, all of which are in our hands.

Mirabeau, in reply to an accusation by his father, thus expresses himself, in a letter dated October 4th 1788.

“ You said of me, father, ‘ He has debased his pen with the stain of venality. It is known that Calonne paid him; and people say, and will believe, that it is the same with Lamoignon *.’

“ Mine a venal pen! When did I ever maintain contraries?—which is the character of venality. It is known that Calonne paid me. . . . Now, those who know this, know nothing. . . . Though solicited by all my friends, who were of my opinion, to take a share in their affairs; though excited by Dupont * himself, to

* The accusation was false, as the reader will soon perceive; but had it been true, it ill became the Marquis of Mirabeau to make such a charge, for he gave his son no sort of pecuniary assistance, nor did he ever pay him his marriage pension.

† Dupont de Nemours.

whom I appeal, and who scoffed at me for not having secured 40,000 livres a year during the frenzy of stock-jobbing, I entered into no speculation, even when innocent. I have lived, in a very humble way, upon the produce of my labours, and with the assistance of my friends; but I have never staked a farthing at play, nor received the most trifling pecuniary present—although I, who weighed down, in some degree according to my will, the scales of the stock-exchange, could have sold my silence for any sum of money I chose to ask. Whether right or wrong, I have rendered considerable services to the finance department under M. de Calonne's administration. I can prove by authentic documents, 1st, that the work upon the *Caisse d'Escompte*, hasty and imperfect as it is*, saved many honest people whom sharpers were about to dupe; 2ndly, that the St. Charles shares, which I

* In a letter to Mauvillon, Mirabeau thus speaks of his book on the *Caisse d'Escompte* :—

“ This book is very elementary; and as it required to be read in a given time, besides the precipitation in writing it, there is to be found in it a little varnish foreign to the subject, and but few generalisations, because I should not have been understood, and I should have been cavilled at.”—*Letters from Mirabeau to Mauvillon*, pp. 16, 17.

“ I confess that I consider the book on the Bank of St. Charles, which has been much less successful than that on the *Caisse d'Escompte*, as much better, more scientific, more orthodox, and, if I might be allowed to say so, as the true theory of public banks. It is difficult to believe that this work was written and printed in ten days. It is a feat of strength, perhaps, but the danger was imminent.—*Ibid.*”

found at 900 francs, and which fell in a week to 400, cost the country fifty-four millions, and but for me, would, in a few weeks, have cost it three times as much. Lastly, my dear father, I caused a fall in the Philippines*. I have thus foiled stock-jobbing in all its forms: I have checked that atrocious system which absorbed all the specie in the kingdom, discouraged all honest industry, and being at length grafted upon the Court, was preparing for the country an overflowing of new corruptions. So long as M. de Calonne was not a party chief, participating in the system of stock-jobbing, he was delighted with what I was doing, and he even supported me; but he never disbursed any thing more than the expenses of printing the book on the Bank of St. Charles, which he paid to the printer in person. When the minister became himself a stock-jobber, he wanted to impose silence upon me; but I spoke in a still louder voice. He then let loose upon me that mountebank, Beaumarchais†. You know the rest. My revenge being taken, (and it was only so severe and so deadly because they wanted to *debase me with the stain of venality*,) I consummated a rupture already

* The Philippines were the shares of the Company of the Philippine Islands, another creation of the banker Carbarrus, of which Mirabeau also pointed out the illusions.

† Beaumarchais, one of the Directors of the Water Company, at Paris, wrote in the name of the Company, a witty and measured, but ironical and malicious reply, which irritated Mirabeau to a pitch of fury.

known to the public, by writing to M. de Calonne letter, such as a hired scribe never wrote to his employer. If you saw that letter, which Dupont will show you any doubt upon your mind of my having put forth ~~my~~ real opinions and convictions, instead of a subject ~~base~~, accepted in exchange for a degrading hire, will disappear in an instant *."

It is for this very reason, and with a view to substitute this persuasion for the conjectures with which Mirabeau's memory is charged on the faith of his enemies, and from the fault of his biographers, that we insert in our text a part of the letter, or rather of the volume † alluded to by Mirabeau in the above letter to his father.

The reader will, no doubt, remark the bitter, and, at times, declamatory style of this letter, which being written a short time after the reply to Beaumarchais, resembles it in vehemence and anger. This style is explained by the deep impressions of the writer; by his conviction which outlived the change in the ministerial system; by the unexpected determination of the government, which, by its injustice and fraudulent manœuvres, offended Mirabeau's delicacy, and by arbitrary and dangerous measures wounded his patriotism. Part of his ire, we admit, may be

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his father, dated October 4th 1788.

† The manuscript, entirely in Mirabeau's hand-writing, would fill 300 8vo pages.

attributed to the minister's desertion of him, after having supported and excited him to write. M. de Calonne, whether from weakness or from duplicity, having ceased to support him, perhaps drew up himself, or allowed to be passed by the Council, the decrees of July 17th and August 24th 1784, in which the book on the Bank of St. Charles, and the Letter to Le Couteulx de la Noraye, are censured, and ordered to be suppressed.

“ The moment has at length arrived, Sir, which I predicted and apprehended—that moment when my reputation, my principles, my safety, my honour, and, above all, the good of my country, command me to cite you before the tribunal of public opinion, and call upon it to judge between us.

“ After six months of vain attempts, useless counsels, and unnecessary labour, I find myself compelled to overthrow, in my own opinion, the throne I would willingly have raised for you in that of my fellow-citizens. Not only must I renounce the hope of all the good you might have done, but it becomes necessary that I should oppose the evil you are committing.

“ Would I were able to become your security, but you force me to come forward as your accuser. I would have wasted away my life for your success; I must now employ many painful hours to save my fellow-citizens. How, with the profound sense I entertain of your servile deference for perverse advisers, can I refrain

known to the public, by writing your grasp the letter, such as a hired scribe never immediately destroy our If you saw that letter, which upon which they are any doubt upon your mind effect of truth, reason, real opinions and conduct in his inconsiderate career, accepted in exchange minister, who has thrown the in an instant *." department loose upon the necks of

It is for this and eager covetousness, and placed in tute this honour of the government and that of the Mirabeau enemy why, Sir, are you such a minister? Why in chance bring me in contact with you? Why did your amiable qualities seduce me *? Why did you

* Mirabeau never concealed his connexion with M. de Calonne. Among other evidence is the following passage found in his work on the Waters of Paris:—

"The Minister of Finance begged me, urged me, nay, encouraged me to do it." (p. 10.)

"Afterwards, in the terrible work entitled "Denunciation of Stock-jobbing to the King and the Assembly of Notables," published February 20th 1787, and directed partly against the then palpable, and afterwards too notorious consequences of this Minister's blunders, Mirabeau wrote:—

"I have already attempted to spread information on these subjects; I was authorised, nay, urged to do so, and I think I have acquired a right to say that I have always used in this salutary mission the arguments of sound logic." (p. 10.)

In writing his "Denunciation of Stock-jobbing," Mirabeau used in his text, sometimes in his notes, some of the facts, conjectures, and arguments, which the reader is about to examine. They are, in general, imitations and not repetitions; for if Mirabeau had repeated himself literally, we should have given, in fragments only, that part of the letter to M. de Calonne which we here insert. We

Make use of me? Why, when you deserted the cause which you had put into my hands, did you impose upon me the duty of defending it against yourself? Did you take me for one of those thoughtless or dishonest men who may be ordered to fit to circumstances, their feelings and despicable talents? If such was your error, you are about to be cruelly undeceived.

“ However, Sir, by what do you justify having formed such an opinion of my feelings or disposition? When have I, in your presence, ceased to be myself? What truth have you ever heard me conceal or betray? Point out any period when manly inflexibility has ceased to dictate my writings and my discourse. Have I not a right to your esteem? . . . And I will preserve it, Sir, or, at all events, I will remain worthy of it, though at the expense of your enmity. As you have granted a law equally absurd, impolitic, and immoral, of which my friends—whom you consulted only in the hope of obtaining advice conformable to your wishes—and I, whom your indiscretion alone admitted to your confidence, have long since shown you the evils, errors, and defects, since, by this law *, you destroy, as much

cannot repeat too often that we shall not use things already published except in cases of absolute necessity.

We shall take care to give in our notes any of these imitations that may occur.

* This refers to the decree in Council, rendered October 2nd 1785, “ appointing Commissioners for the liquidation of time bargains, and compromises of royal bonds or other stock,” in exe-

as you can, the good I have effected in this kingdom, ravaged by your want of skill and your cowardice; as you have dared to try the effect of threats upon me, with a view of preventing me from continuing the lawful publication of my opinions and principles—now that you are in contradiction with yourself, and that truth is displeasing to you:—I shall prove to you, Sir, that I am a good citizen, and you a bad minister; that you know neither what you ought to do, what you can do, nor what you will do, and that your late decree is a disgrace to the government, a scourge to public credit, and the destruction of all confidence between merchants.

“ But, Sir, although you have pursued me with persecution and insult, this letter is dictated by neither hatred nor revenge. With reference to the former, I was inclined to love you; as for the latter, what more powerful avenger than yourself could your enemies desire? I shall begin this address by showing you that it is necessary for my just defence. The history of our connexion is sufficient to prove this. I shall, therefore, dwell upon it long enough to show the contemptible weakness of mind you have evinced in an office which demands much more method and firmness than you possess.

cution of the decree of the 7th of August preceding, which “renews the ordinances and regulations concerning the Stock-exchange, and prohibits fraudulent negotiations.” (Note by Mirabeau.)

“ MY CONNEXION WITH M. DE CALONNE.

“ You remember, no doubt, the first circumstances that made us known to each other. I was desirous of mixing a little good with the evils of an East India Company which you had created. I was not ignorant that your plan—conceived with precipitation, and intended solely to defeat the views of Marshal de Castries who, with good reason, had refused his consent to all arrangements of this nature, was the result of mere intrigue ; but I knew too well the influence of courtly power to be surprised that an India Company, which was a real usurpation of one department over another, should have been very imperfectly constituted. But as, after all, its privileges could be the mistake of only a small number of years, I should not have considered this establishment, bad in itself and worse in the details of its constitution, as a fault sufficient to make the country despair of finding any good in you, even if the first measure of your administration had made upon me a less favourable impression.

“ Few ministers can boast of so noble a débüt as you had, Sir. The injustice of violent and arbitrary cancelling, expiated and repaired by a renewal of the revenue leases ; paper money abolished ; a curse upon annuities pronounced by the legislator ; a loan better combined than was ever before known in France ; the sinking fund instituted ; public credit raised, supported, and increased :—all seemed to an-

nounce that you entertained correct views; and the extreme facility you had in appropriating the knowledge of others as your own, confirmed this impression sufficiently to entitle me to pardon for having yielded to the fascination and graces of your conversation. Strictly speaking, you had already quitted the right path. The retroactive decree of the 24th of January terminated by a piece of revolting iniquity*, and led to those pigmy battles excited by the quarrel about the dividends, with which the public authority ought never to have meddled. This decree showed sufficiently that you were deficient in principle, in firmness, and, especially, in dignity. But several pretences, though very frivolous and scarcely deserving of excuse in a minister, seemed to give a colour to this great fault. Men†, whose ignorance and meanness were, perhaps, unknown to you, denounced, to the government, extensive frauds, immense robberies—a canker of dishonesty,

* This decree declares “null and void premium bargains concerning the dividends on the Shares of the *Caisse d'Escompte*, &c.” (Note by Mirabeau.) Although the work upon the *Caisse d'Escompte* was written, in certain respects, under the influence of Colonne, Mirabeau, resolving to argue according to his convictions alone, devoted two chapters (VII, and VIII, pp. 70 to 110) to oppose the decree of the 24th of January; and, for instance, in page 82 he says:—“Even the Almighty cannot make a retroactive law just.”

† The Commissioners of the *Caisse d'Escompte*, “who had nevertheless,” says Mirabeau, “no mission from their constituents to demand a prohibition of dividend bargains.”—*On the Caisse d'Escompte*, p. 73.

in short, which threatened to destroy all the wealth of trade * ; and the excess of your delicacy might have afforded you a sort of excuse in the strong resentment excited by suspicions unjustly cast upon you.

“ Besides, this decree was not your work ; the public voice named its author who, long ago, robbed us of the right of being surprised at any thing he did. In fine, I was preparing at that very time, upon this strange law, a criticism severe enough for me to be allowed to excuse any share you had in it. I had no doubt that you would withdraw it, and be the first to set that noble example, as prudent as it is generous, even in a minister of state, of retracting an error, and confessing an injustice while you are repairing it. In one word, I had hopes of your administration, and I was sincerely anxious to assist you with my feeble voice, both against others and against yourself.

* The commissioners deputed by the shareholders of the *Caisse d'Escompte*, declared that “ they considered it their duty to denounce to his Majesty an abuse which might endanger the fortunes of His Majesty’s subjects.” . . Upon which, it is to be remarked, as I have done in my work on the *Caisse d'Escompte*, that the amount of differences lost did not reach 500,000 livres ; which is proved by a detailed list of these bargains, in the collection of documents published by order of government. The sum total of dividends sold amounted to 15,400, and their ordinary price to 180 livres. The dividends were settled for at 150 livres ; thus, there was a loss of 30 upon each dividend, making a total loss of 462,000 livres, to be borne by about twenty individuals who, for the most part, had already made enormous profits by the rise they had produced in a great measure by purchasing these same dividends at prices they could never realise. (Note by Mirabeau.)

“ Such is the plain and faithful statement of my feelings towards you when I addressed you some observations upon the necessity of preventing the India Company from extending, beyond what its privileges warranted, a monopoly destructive of all industry, and of the national trade. This it would infallibly do, if you left to the discretion of its Directors the means of discouraging our merchants, ruining our manufactories, depopulating our workshops, and, as a consequence, the districts which derive advantage from these latter.

“ I know not your motives, Sir ; but in reply to my letters you invited me to call upon you. Our first conversation, which was long and confidential, led me, for my misfortune perhaps, into a career in which, at least, I shall always preserve a pure conscience and a bold line of argument.

“ In this conference, you maintained an absolute silence upon your India Company ; for all that related to it was already settled. Hostile to our friends and allies, tributary to our natural rivals, a tyrant, from its birth, over our principal national manufactures, this Company, which you intended should live by the privilege of trading to India, even before it had proceeded thither, was to open for you a new order of things, and become one of the calamities of your administration. Thus, it was unnecessary to speak to me of this institution, which never became a subject of conversation between us, except when I took to you the remonstrances of the Alsacian manufacturers, who proved to you, at a very

early period, that the charter of this Company betrayed paltry views of private advantage, instead of developing wise and useful combinations calculated to make us forget the error of its privilege.

“ But if, in this our first interview, you said nothing about your India Company, you expressed an earnest desire that I should endeavour to propagate information concerning different branches of political economy. From that moment, I appeared to you such as I have ever been, and you were then able to judge of the man whom chance had sent you.

“ ‘ If I write upon matters of administration,’ said I to you, ‘ I shall do so with freedom, precision, and energy. There are writers enough who have prostituted the power of written language in defending or protecting error : it is time to offer a purer worship to truth. Let not the government expect to find in the same individual the means employed by strong minds, combined with the resources of little minds. If you think that my pen can second your views for the public good, you will not touch my independence, which alone, by making up for my deficiency in talent, has hitherto insured me success.’ ”.

MISSION TO WRITE ON MATTERS OF ADMINISTRATION, AND TO CORRESPOND WITH M. DE CALONNE.

“ Nobody, Sir, better than yourself, is able to assume

every tone and every form. You earnestly applauded my honest roughness, and it was upon pledging your word you would never expose me to any other influence than my own conviction, that I consented to comply with your desire, and write on every branch of the financial department, which should appear to me deserving either of censure, or of the observations of patriotism. This is the only condition I ever made with you."

BOOK ON THE CAISSE D'ESCOMPTE.

" I was then preparing my book on the *Caisse d'Escompte*, the greater part of which I composed in England. My private connexions had enabled me to cast an attentive and searching glance at the false system pursued by the Directors of that useful institution. The most dangerous and most monstrous of principles was about to convert it into a nucleus of stock-jobbing. The price of shares rose higher and higher. Covetousness, which alone settled the price, drove back the point she aimed at, in proportion as she was about to reach it. The Directors of the *Caisse d'Escompte* had become connected with gamblers, who laid it down as a principle, that circulations arising from stock-jobbing were necessary to the success of the establishment, insomuch as they would fecundate the dividends more and more, and that, consequently, the value of the shares, bloated out by the discounts arising from the most furious

stock-jobbing, would contribute to the credit of the bank.

“ It could not be doubted that, in this state of things, the speculators, upon the rise of the shares, that is to say, men whose interest it was to multiply these operations without measure, would become entire masters of the *Caisse d'Escompte*; that the boldest and most inconsiderate among them, without caring for fortune, would be the most favoured; and that the praise bestowed upon moderation, good conduct, and a knowledge of business, would appear a derision. This bank of assistance, in a word, far from favouring our true means of prosperity, was in future to be nothing but the fatal leaven of operations hostile to the real resources of the kingdom.

“ These, Sir, and you are well aware of it, are the considerations which require a work on the *Caisse d'Escompte*. You are also aware that events have sufficiently proved the soundness of my doctrine, and the necessity of my book. Its theory is not my own; and how could it be? The man of genius * who, in defiance of so many obstacles, so many detractors, and so many enemies, founded the *Caisse d'Escompte* in France, was not himself the inventor of that institution. We, and we almost alone in Europe, have reached that consummation of ignorance which rendered it difficult to

* Turgot.

found so necessary an establishment, although no city in Europe, except Paris and Constantinople*, was without one. Thus, the theory of my work upon the *Caisse d'Escompte*, does not belong to myself; but I can do myself this justice, quite sufficient for my self-love, that but for me, but for my anxiety to warm with my natural energy, the conservative truths of good order, and but for my active ardour in giving them publicity, this important service would still remain to be rendered. Who knows to what extent imprudence might have driven these excesses, if the Directors of the Bank of Assistance had not been compelled to yield to the evidence of my observations? Thanks to your weakness, they have done so but imperfectly, and yet there is a great change in their measures.

“ It was necessary that, in this work, I should speak of the decree of the 24th of January—of that decree which is an eternal disgrace to those who solicited it, and an indelible stain upon the merchants who availed themselves of it, to decline fulfilling their engagements. This decree is a deplorable instance of what may be done for the destruction of the best principles, by the personal situation of a minister. I knew but too little of you, Sir, to suppose that after exciting me against some obscure stock-jobbers, you would desert me before

* This observation was made by M. Panchaud, in his speech at the inauguration of the *Caisse d'Escompte*. (Note by Mirabeau.)

their powerful protectors. I was informed, however, that such would be the case, and that it would be useless for me to seek your support against the indefatigable watchfulness of the foes of freedom and truth. I was, therefore, obliged to go and publish in a foreign country * my work on the *Caisse d'Escompte*, and more than a month elapsed between my first conference with you, and the appearance of this book.

“The noise it made, no doubt suddenly called me to your recollection. I was sent for, praised, petted Only you desired that some passages might be cancelled relative to the decree of the 24th of January. I refused to cancel any thing, and, for the first time, you heard me pronounce these words, which, at this very moment, must vibrate through your soul:—

“‘I will pursue, even to my death, every retroactive law’

“You may depend upon it, Sir, that I shall reli-

* “We took a journey to Bouillon for the impression of the *Caisse d'Escompte*. The Princes Rohan and Guéméné were there in exile. They came to see us every day. The latter complained that he had been cheated by his agent, and had been himself accused of a desire to cheat every body. He begged Mirabeau, who promised to comply, to write upon this subject, and expose several iniquitous mysteries; but we were dissuaded from it by our friends, who feared that the warmth which Mirabeau displays in all he writes, might prove injurious to the two Princes, and delay their recall.”—*Unpublished Memoirs by Madame de Nehra*.

giously perform this oath. The victory remained with me ; the distribution of my work was publicly authorised ; and if I did not obtain from you a promise to withdraw the decree of the 24th of January, I have at least this satisfaction, that you have never dared to quote it in any subsequent act of legislation, not even in that where you repeat all the ordinances relative to stock-jobbing and its bargains, nor in the retroactive law which you have just promulgated."

WORK ON THE BANK OF ST. CHARLES.

" It was at the very moment, Sir, of the publication of my book on the *Caisse d'Escompte*, that you requested me to write one on the Bank of St. Charles. I was then not aware that even so far back as February, you had received a short but prophetic note, pointing out the dangers and illusions of this establishment; and I informed you that, during my absence, a merchant with whom I was intimate, had written upon this subject some very sensible remarks which a literary man was putting into form. You expressed a wish that I should write and publish a complete treatise upon the same question. It was to precede the law which you purposed rendering to prohibit the negociation of foreign stock ; and the success of the book on the *Caisse d'Escompte* had given me, you observed, a sort of mission, which the finance minister was bound to confirm. I asked leave to make known your intentions. The

moment they were known, I obtained the sacrifice of the work preparing by the merchants. You sent me papers from your office; the inspectors of commerce had conferences with me; four days subsequently, my manuscript was in your hands; and a week after, the work on the bank of St. Charles was published.

“Never was an illusion more completely or more rapidly destroyed. The shares of the Bank of St. Charles were at 800 livres; they fell immediately. We saw them successively fall below 420 livres; and this fall alone put an end to the constant purchases which the French stock-jobbers were making in Spain to resell in France; for it must not be forgotten that the Spaniards were too prudent to cause a rise in their bank shares at Madrid, in the same proportion that they did at Paris. Thus, the last share of the bank of St. Charles would now be in France, if the price had not fallen in Paris.

“Few citizens, I dare to say, Sir, have had the happiness of performing such a service to their country. Not only have I cured a fatal madness, and stopped the too rapid progress of our purchases in shares of the bank of St. Charles, but I have likewise totally prevented the importation of Philippine shares, now more discredited in Spain than even those of St. Charles, and which would have fed the fury of stock-jobbing with a new aliment the more dangerous, because a sort of systematic connexion had already been formed

between the shares of St. Charles, those of the Philippines, those of our own *Caisse d'Escompte*, and all negotiable commercial effects—a connexion which, by establishing between them a constant action and reaction, rendered them all, whether good or bad dependant upon each other. Perhaps the overthrow of this system, which sooner or later would have proved highly disastrous, entitled me to the gratitude of government . . . How have I been rewarded for my trouble and exertions?"

SUPPRESSION OF THE WORK ON THE BANK OF ST.
CHARLES.

"You have at least allowed, Sir, a decree * to be rendered, which suppresses my work on the Bank of St. Charles as the production 'of one of those individuals who venture to write on subjects concerning which they are too ill-informed to be able to impart useful information!'. . .

" I ILL-INFORMED †! I who published the original charter of the bank of St. Charles ‡, (a charter of which to say it *en passant*, neither you nor your agents kn

* Decree of the 17th of July 1785. We read elsewhere Mirabeau expected to be deserted by the minister.

" I was convinced that the minister who had asked me to this book, would never have the courage to allow it to be published if I gave him time to be afraid."—*Letters to Mauvillon*, p. 16

† Denunciation of Stock-jobbing, p. 10.

‡ Pages 93 to 162 of vouchers inserted at the end of the work entitled, "On the Discount Bank termed St. Charles."

any thing, nor even had a copy of it); also, the statement presented to the Court of Spain by the founder, and the prospectus published in France by the most devoted agents of M. Cabarrus*. I ILL-INFORMED!—and not a better informed man has appeared to refute my book! I ILL-INFORMED! Why, to weaken, if possible, the truths I have told, it was found necessary to spread a report, so greatly have calumny and impertinence been relied upon, that I was in the pay of the speculators upon the fall, as if (I pass over in silence your entreaties and the infamy of such an imputation) those who invented this absurd piece of stupidity were not themselves speculators upon the rise—as if correct information and rectitude of judgment might not be found in men, induced, by the sole nature of the thing, to wager against the long continued success of those extravagant follies which have seduced even the most renowned among the bankers.

“I have been silent, Sir, concerning those degrading tactics by which you punish a man for the very work you asked him to write. For, is not the suppression of my work, inflicting a punishment upon me? And what an opinion concerning me would wise men form from the decree by which it was intended to stamp my book with infamy, if sad experience had not long ago placed them on their guard against the

* Pages 54 to 92.

natural meaning and the direct consequences of the words used by the government? I was willing to shut my eyes to this scandalous conduct too often resorted to by all governments; but I did more. Seeing your contemptible alarm at the appearance of a book which was, as it were, common to yourself and to me, I declared to you, that, if the Court of Madrid required a victim to expiate the offence of endeavouring to serve my country, I would willingly suffer myself to be taken to the Bastille.

“ Perhaps, Sir, from this moment I should have judged you: perhaps prudence should have urged me to remain at a distance from you; for the pretended confidence, and even the appearance of favour granted by a weak-minded minister, is a very heavy burthen, and endangers both the happiness and the reputation of the firm and independent man who consents to approach him. But, to an excitable imagination, how wonderful is the magic of those who decide upon the fate of empires! Seduction, confidential statements, or caresses, cost you nothing, if by them you can obtain the success of the moment, which is always as far as you can see; the horizon of your ideas never extends further. Thus, did you appear to feel, as strongly as I did myself, the impropriety, to say no worse, of the decree in council suppressing the work on the bank of St. Charles. But M. d’Aranda*, the Court of Spain, and

* Spanish Ambassador at Paris.

the keeper of the seals supplied you with
 'Nevertheless,' you did not fail to
 'inuation of my confidence a suffi-
 'self-love requires one?' At the
 'easier than ever to employ
 the book of the 'ill-
 a decree in council, than
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 such a work was, in my opinion, of
 necessity *."

* The book on the bank of St. Charles did the speculators on the
 rise an injury that greatly irritated them. They revenged them-
 selves by the most bitter accusations, and Mirabeau prepared a
 vehement reply, which we possess, but do not transcribe for the
 reasons already given. We extract only a few passages concerning
 the errors and misfortunes of his youth.

"Why should I condescend to analyze this declamatory jargon,
 or to refute the filthy and calumnious assertions vomited forth
 against the author of a work which, I admit, has been proscribed,
 but to which no one has attempted a reply?

"How would those against whom I have fought be relieved
 from care and uneasiness, were I to use similar weapons, which,
 however, I shall assuredly not pick up from the mud to wield them
 in my turn. I owe an account of my private life to those only who
 are connected with me. Besides, such details are never of any
 avail with malevolent persons. And what care I for the opinions of
 the honest authors, hawkers, and distributors of printed or manu-
 script libels against me, all of whom I confound together in my
 contempt as so many base calumniators? I never had any connexion
 with them, nor could I ever have been tempted to have any. I have
 long since stated this to all honest men and to an impartial public.
 I know better than anybody else that I have had to expiate the
 offences of exuberant youth, and the sad consequences of errors

natural meaning and the direct consequences of the words used by the government? I was willing to shut my eyes to this scandalous conduct too often resorted to by all governments; but I did more. Seeing your contemptible alarm at the appearance of a book which was, as it were, common to yourself and to me, I declared to you, that, if the Court of Madrid required a victim to expiate the offence of endeavouring to serve my country, I would willingly suffer myself to be taken to the Bastille.

“ Perhaps, Sir, from this moment I should have judged you: perhaps prudence should have urged me to remain at a distance from you; for the pretended confidence, and even the appearance of favour granted by a weak-minded minister, is a very heavy burthen, and endangers both the happiness and the reputation of the firm and independent man who consents to approach him. But, to an excitable imagination, how wonderful is the magic of those who decide upon the fate of empires! Seduction, confidential statements, or caresses, cost you nothing, if by them you can obtain the success of the moment, which is always as far as you can see; the horizon of your ideas never extends further. Thus, did you appear to feel, as strongly as I did myself, the impropriety, to say no worse, of the decree in council suppressing the work on the bank of St. Charles. But M. d’Aranda*, the Court of Spain. and

* Spanish Ambassador at Paris.

the enmity of the keeper of the seals supplied you with as many excuses. ‘Nevertheless,’ you did not fail to add, ‘is not the continuation of my confidence a sufficient reparation, if your self-love requires one?’ At the same time, you appeared readier than ever to employ my pen; thus no sooner was the book of the ‘ill-informed man’ suppressed by a decree in council, than the minister of finance requested him to write another upon loans. Such a work was, in my opinion, of urgent necessity *.”

* The book on the bank of St. Charles did the speculators on the rise an injury that greatly irritated them. They revenged themselves by the most bitter accusations, and Mirabeau prepared a vehement reply, which we possess, but do not transcribe for the reasons already given. We extract only a few passages concerning the errors and misfortunes of his youth.

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M. DE CALONNE REQUESTS ME TO WRITE A BOOK OF
LOANS.

“ Though we have obtained peace for three years past, how far are we from enjoying its blessings ! Continually goaded by the want of money, the government

into which circumstances drove me much more than my own acts ; I have had to repair the injury they did me ; for it is too easily lost sight of, in most cases, that youth does not form itself but is formed by conjunctures. The nature of my expiations alone remains to be shown. This is henceforth the only account which I may be called upon to give ; and I say this with the more conviction, because I am myself devoted to that species of magistracy which is not only the most suitable to him who respects himself, but to which he has a right to belong, when, after acquiring knowledge and experience, he is able to express his thoughts in a manner to excite attention. * * * *

“ No ! I shall not lose the fruits of the civic indignation inspired by so much fraud and spoliation ! Before I lay down the cestus, before I quit a career in which I have always shown a pure conscience and bold arguments, I shall examine stock-jobbing itself in all its bearings. I will pursue it through its tricks, its turns, and its results. I will divulge its black perversity, its hideous turpitude. I will give the history of what it has been everywhere, especially in France, where the want of knowing its operations and the prohibition to write have rendered it so grasping and so fatal. This will be the last service I shall attempt to render our finances, and the year 1787 will not be over ere this work shall again make the calumnious and stock-jobbing fraternity resume their yelping. After this, I shall quit these ephemeral pastels, and venture to grasp the burine of history, which my feeble hands have long been trying to use ; nor shall my passage through this world, agitated by the ebb and flow of the passions of some few mortals, close before I have branded with the stamp of infamy still greater crimes, and more illustrious criminals.”

marks each succeeding year with fresh loans, which remove further and further the relief so often promised, and required by so many pressing interests. The rulers of the state seem to rest upon the idea, that the taxes are not increased. But what aggravation can be more dreadful than the indefinite prolongation of those which already exist? A slight mitigation of this evil, which is capable of disheartening the most zealous, would be to raise our loans with industrious and prudent economy. No doubt, the finest of countries is also the most fruitful in resources. But are we doomed never to calculate the latter, except in their lamentable connexion with immense debts to liquidate *? Shall we never behold the riches of our soil flow upon the most numerous and useful class of those by whom it is inhabited—upon these real creditors of the earth and of nature? And how can we attain this great revolution, so long as loans, whether in their form, their application, or their influence, shall depend wholly upon the whirlwind of the metropolis? Here, people think only of making rapid fortunes; and the loans which the King commands, with grief, no doubt, are waited for and anticipated as spoils, which avarice is eager to pounce upon. They are wholly subservient to the inconsiderate opinions, excessive wants, insatiable wishes, and immeasurable ambition of the people of Paris. Men of business, who know of no wealth except gold and contracts, are the

* Denunciation of Stock-jobbing, p. 3.

sole arbiters of the interest which the nation is ~~to~~ pay. Can moderate pretensions be expected from such people?

“On the other hand, who is not conscious that circumstances are more serious and pressing now than they ever were before, whether from the calamities of a truly disastrous year, or from the fruitless exertions and murderous insanity of stock-jobbing? I had viewed these evils too closely not to be deeply affected; and as we must expect more from things evident to our senses than from reasoning, which supposes considerable attention, and the power of generalising or abstracting, I thought myself fortunate in being able to publish under the sanction of government, and upon a basis supplied by itself, calculations relative to loans, both to show what is to be expected from the different forms in which they are made, and to prove by results as incontestible as arithmetic itself, that annuity loans especially ought to be for ever prohibited, as one of the most formidable scourges that could ever afflict the kingdom and its finances. . . . I should have fulfilled this duty, Sir; and perhaps it would have been better to have allowed me to finish this work, than to have made me write useless papers for you. But you had, no doubt, your reasons for not hurrying me. Since I saw you pay off, for the sake of empty boasting, in August last, that is to say, at the period when all proved our distress, twenty-nine millions of debentures,

bearing only five per cent. interest, and not at all pressing upon the Stock Exchange *,—since, I have seen you increase, according to your good pleasure, all the pecuniary difficulties now bearing upon Paris, that vast mine of public credit—since, in a word, I have had an opportunity of appreciating your abilities, I can scarcely believe that you would have calmly listened to all I had to say upon the absurdity of annuity loans, and I have not the least doubt that you would have suppressed that work likewise ;—for it would have contained all the defects of my other works : it would have unanswerably established the truth, and rendered great mistakes difficult.”

LETTER TO M. LE COUTEULX DE LA NORAYE.

“ Meanwhile, my work on the Shares of the Bank of St. Charles, and even my personal safety, were clandestinely attacked, in consequence of the clamours of the banker, who was agent to M. Cabarrus. In this attack, I saw nothing but a natural opportunity of publishing the facts which took place every day, as so many confirmations of my theory. My letter to M. le Couteulx de la Noraye accordingly appeared, but not

* This incredible operation, the decree in council ordering it, the quackery and unintelligible neologism which dictated it, require a separate letter to themselves. But I am too far from sources, and even details. The perfectly correct result which I have pointed out in the text is sufficient to arouse the well-informed, or even the attentive reader.—NOTE BY MIRABEAU.

before I had given battle more than once to his patron in order to obtain leave to publish it. You know the production, Sir; you had the proof sheets, and notes upon them. You demanded that some parts should be cancelled; I acceded to your wishes in all those parts which affected only my self-love as an author, without injury to the subject. Again, I had a right to suppose that a writing, some parts of which a minister had requested might be cancelled before publication, had by that very circumstance received that minister's sanction, which, if it did not impose upon him the duty of supporting all that the writing contained, took from him the power of mortifying the author."

DECREE IN COUNCIL SUPPRESSING THE LETTER TO
M. LE COUTEULX DE LA NORAYE.

" You did not think so, Sir. Another decree in council * suppressed my letter, two months, it is true, after two editions were exhausted; and the decree contained such frivolous specifications, that M. de la Noraye himself will surely not add this morsel of eloquence to his personal archives, which contain his letters of nobility, granted on account of the 'deserved and hereditary reputation of his family:' such being the harmonious period by which your decree has consecrated the name

* August 24th 1785.

of Le Couteulx. But these delays and specifications, by shewing the difficulty you find in pleasing de la Noraye, the banker, without any offence to justice, are not calculated to render me insensible to the suppression of my letter.

“ But ought I to have expected that the government would praise the Directors of the *Caisse d'Escompte*, and confound this bank of assistance with the ignorant men, wholly guiltless of patriotism, who conduct it, whom my books have rendered more timid in the commission of evil, but who, having brought the institution to the verge of its ruin, would probably, without these books, have pushed it over the precipice? Could I, who had done some little good, behold with indifference this puerile and cowardly fear, which made you sacrifice a useful writer to adversaries who have not dared publicly to refute a single line of his writings? Ought I to have been persuaded that, as a minister, you had any interest in covering their want of power to reply to me by a decree which made reply unnecessary? Far from concealing from you my thoughts and feelings on this subject, I declared to you that I would not withhold from the public any of my just reasons for dissatisfaction.

“ ‘Either M. de la Noraye,’ I said to you, ‘is a bad citizen, or I am a calumniator*’. Either the

* M. le Couteulx de la Noraye was the principal agent of Cabarrus, and at the same time held the office of Commissioner of the

Directors of the *Caisse d'Escompte* are very reprehensible as public men *, or I am a pitiful reasoner, and a

Caisse d'Escompte, over which he had the more influence, because his brother was its chief Director. In Mirabeau's letter to M. le Couteulx de la Noraye, this banker is accused principally of turning the *Caisse d'Escompte* from its true and legal object, in order to employ its capital in the operations of Cabarrus,—thus exposing the *Caisse* to serious danger. Mirabeau specifies as an instance, that in 1785, Le Couteulx exhausted all its specie, which compelled it to suspend its payments, and led to the decree in Council of the 23rd of November 1783, by the repeal of which M. de Calonne acquired great credit at the outset of his administration.

* The *Caisse d'Escompte* having been overthrown by the ineffable stupidity of the very same men who still manage it, no sooner was it restored to life by the bold measure of M. de Calonne who, in the first days of his administration, destroyed the proper circulation, than the Directors of the *Caisse* turned their attention towards obtaining a rise in the value of its shares, as if such rise, which only betrayed their covetousness, was any proof of their talents. They abdicated all decency, and became public purchasers of shares and dividends. They created, beyond measure, paper for circulation, as a scaffolding for their scandalous jobbing; and lending themselves to all the excesses of the gamblers in the market, they successively encumbered the Stock-Exchange with shares of the bank of St. Charles, shares of the Water Company, and shares of the *Caisse d'Escompte*, at the most extravagant rates. They threw the greatest discredit upon the royal bonds, which did not offer them any fictitious value by which they could impose upon the public. This stock of their creation having multiplied to an immense extent, soon rendered money scarce in the midst of abundance. It prevented the interest of money from falling to four per cent, the rate fixed by the very decree which instituted the *Caisse d'Escompte*. They drew all the capital in the country to the metropolis, to the great injury of our manufacturing towns, since the withdrawal of specie from the provinces, raised the rate of interest in the city of Lyons to 7 and

very inconsiderate writer. Ought I to leave the matter in doubt? No, Sir; I dare assert that the public

8 per cent. The strange devotedness of the Directors of the *Caisse d'Escompte* to the house of Le Couteulx, occasioned the exportation of fifty millions worth of our coined specie to be exchanged for the paper money of Spain.

To make up for so many misdeeds, what has this *Caisse d'Escompte* done for the advantage of the kingdom? Has it not treated with disgusting favouritism the letters of circulation, and the engagements of its Directors, to the detriment of trade, and for the benefit of a truly scandalous system of stock-jobbing, which could only throw discredit upon all public stock? Has it favoured, in the slightest degree, the last loan? Has it assisted the provinces or the sea-port towns? Has it attempted, by circulating its paper through the interior of the kingdom, to obviate the useless and constant conveyance of specie in all directions? Have not the interests of the nation in this respect been unworthily sacrificed to those of the directing bankers, whose private operations the *Caisse d'Escompte* now exclusively favours? And what might not be said concerning the stock-jobbing frenzy of these bankers?

* * * * *

Behold the Commissioners of the *Caisse d'Escompte*, who solicit, without requiring it, without a motive, and obtain by base calumnies, and culpable manœuvring, a decree, the consequences of which are deplorable. This decree has created and protects a band of pick-pockets, whom the bankers, in their thirst of gain, dare not punish, and who have been increased by the decrees of the 7th of August and 2nd of October; thanks to the impunity with which these rascals thrive in spite of their infamy.

* * * * * Behold, the body of Directors who, after having infested the market with their paper, to such a degree that the *Caisse* can no longer suffice to discount them, demand from the Minister of Finance an aid of from eight to ten millions, under pretence of assisting the Stock Exchange, which means, probably, assisting the holders of the engagements of Messrs. Le Couteulx, who have

good and the truth are under too many obligations to me. To suffer myself to be humiliated for serving them, would be betraying them.'

"The only mode in which you defended yourself was, by endeavouring to deceive me once more by persuading me, as you did, when a book on the bank of St. Charles was suppressed, that this new decree in council had also been surreptitiously obtained from you by the keeper of the seals, and that you had even softened its bitterness. Thus you softened the bitterness of a decree surreptitiously obtained from you.

lent their signatures in support of the shares of St. Charles. Thus, we begin by purchasing fifty millions' worth of shares of the Madrid bank, which robs us of specie to that amount; then the *Caisse d'Escompte* begs the assistance of government to aid those who had a hand in sending away these fifty millions with a greater amount of cash than they possess, or have been able to procure What a strange inundation of covetousness, stupidity, and impudence! This sketch is sufficient (and how many more touches could I add to it!) to enable the public to judge whether such men, whether such Directors, deserve that the Minister of Finance should condemn himself to the contemptible weakness of deserting the work of the man he had himself sent forth against them. Would it not have been thought that he would have taken advantage of my success, and of the public indignation I had excited, to free our trade and the bank from this contemptible, though dangerous mob; and supersede an incomplete and badly-constituted establishment, by an institution more useful, more extensive, and possessing greater resources, means, and facilities, and destined, more especially, to strive towards the reduction of interest, which is the first and greatest of blessings in a kingdom wholly agricultural and commercial?—(NOTE BY MIRABEAU.)

'But, after all,' you several times repeated, 'what is a decree in council?'

"What is it?—Alas! Sir, no doubt the number of these decrees, so contradictory to each other, their inexorable confusion, and the certainty that they are often obtained by intrigue, weaken them in the public opinion. But this is a great misfortune, for decrees in council are laws of administration, and the evils they may produce threaten our very existence, for only a few citizens can elude their operation.

"Be this as it may, the moment you took upon yourself, a second time, to suppress one of my works, an eternal barrier sprang up between us, and all confidence was thenceforward impossible. The man who can do without self-esteem, has never the courage to show, at my personal risk, esteem for another.

"But if reason severely condemns the weakness in a statesman because such a defect excludes all public virtue, and is sufficient of itself to extinguish the most brilliant talents, this weakness, by imparting a sort of amiable facility, gives to a minister powers of personal seduction, provided he is a clever man. You are very clever, Sir; clever enough to deceive yourself as well as others. People too easily believe that you comprehend what you know, and that you know all you listen to with a sparkling of your fine intellectual eyes, and that you may easily be brought to do that which has been proved to you to be proper. But people are

quite mistaken. Wholly occupied in assuming a bodily and intellectual attitude favourable to your self-conceit in increasing the enjoyments of your vanity, which is the least substantial of vanities,—in escaping from the difficulties of the moment, in thinking how you shall contrive to remain a minister to-morrow, without knowing how you shall be one in a week,—you require expedients, not advice,—trumpeters, not friends,—praises, not the truth. Provided your society, I had almost said your coteries, flatter you, and that those who beset you are not ill-tempered ;—provided your indescribable levity is amused, and nothing tears you from your pleasures, the affairs of state go on fast enough ;—you delay urgent business for whole months ; then you settle in an hour that which requires the most deliberate attention, and the deepest meditation. In a word, he would be framing a romance to deceive himself with, who believed that you had any other combinations than those of intrigue, and those arising from the interests of your petty passions I am well aware of this at present ; but I was not sufficiently so two months since, for the illusions you had cast over me were not entirely dissipated. Too deeply offended to condescend to dissimulation, but far from being of an implacable nature, and being always seduced by the attractive familiarity arising from an intercourse with you, I would still have waged war for you on the first signal. A danger, a new object of public advantage, a word demanding my assist-

ance or invoking my zeal, would have proved sufficient."

PLAN OF M. DE CALONNE FOR CANCELLING TIME
BARGAINS.

" You pronounced this word in the overflowing of your confidence. After speaking of the embarrassments of the Stock Exchange at Paris, and of your own embarrassment in being obliged to interpret your decree of the 7th of August, you expressed an intention of cancelling all Time Bargains.

" ' It was the only mode,' you observed, ' of putting an end at once to the embarrassments of the Stock Exchange. Those about you advised the measure; the majority of the merchants demanded it; but your mind was not made up, though you inclined towards the simplicity and rapidity of this expedient.'

" I was struck, as with a thunderbolt, and all my illusions concerning you at once vanished. My personal cause disappeared; I saw only the danger that threatened the public weal, and I tried every thing to dissuade you from so fatal a project. I pointed out to you, with extreme distinctness, that no act of violence could stand in lieu of the progress of time, which alone, by carrying back the discredited stock into the hands of the capitalists, would free the market both from shares bloated by stock-jobbing, and from those loads of bills issued to support them. I explained to you, on this subject, the

theory which will be found developed in this work, and which will be an eternal demonstration of your ignorance and incapacity. But it was more especially to prove to you how impolitic and perverse your intention was, that I employed all the energy of language I possessed.

“ ‘ To annul Time Bargains,’ I said, ‘ is to confound, in one and the same proscription, the gambling bargains of stock-jobbing with the most prudent, real, and lawful operations, and perhaps the most useful in every respect ;—it is assimilating equivocal gamblers—what do I say ?—even those who are totally dishonoured, with the most accredited and most prudent capitalists ;—it is coming to the exclusive assistance of a set of dangerous and despicable men, in nowise jealous of keeping their word. Honest speculators would consider a decree cancelling Time Bargains a dreadful calamity. Would not this alone be sufficient to make you reject with horror a retroactive decree, which already, and from the circumstance alone of its retroaction, which is always unjust, would select its victims by chance, and show partiality against the innocent alone ?

“ ‘ Why should the government disgrace itself in favour of an interest which can never be that of honest men—with the eternal crime of an iniquitous law, which, without even the robber’s excuse—necessity, would overthrow all notions of propriety, good faith, freedom, and equity ; would reward dishonest men in a direct ratio to the

amount of their iniquity, and punish honest and scrupulous men in proportion to the respect they showed to their engagements? What, then, has the government to fear, by leaving events to take their natural course? Have we reached one of those hopeless periods which are the real dissolution of society, and in which the excess of the evil leaves no choice of remedy? Will the national credit be in danger, if, for the sake of saving a few stock-jobbers, you refuse to sacrifice the honest merchants, who have really advanced capital? The ruin of a few stock-jobbers is of no importance whatever. That which is really important to the national credit is, that the ruin of no one shall be effected by a sovereign edict prescribing bad faith. Such ruin would be the more fatal, because it smothers the voice of experience, whilst the ruin that may be attributed to the folly alone of its victims, ultimately teaches wisdom.

“ ‘At the very time you are talking to me of the extension of trade, of the stability of public credit, of the scrupulous respect paid to all the engagements of the state, would you dare to promulgate a law forcibly cancelling engagements freely contracted, in order publicly to reward men who would dishonour their signature, and condemn, to the loss of their property, those who remain steadfastly attached to the imperious principles of morality and justice? What deeper and more incurable wound could you inflict

upon the national credit? In what part of the world would you be able to persuade any man of sense that the minister who presented such a decree to his sovereign for signature, was jealous of supporting the honour of the national engagements? Is it by cancelling, in virtue of a special law, private engagements, that you would set an example to the nation of that rigid probity, without which public credit would be only a snare, and trade a system of dishonour?

“ ‘ What an attack is this upon morality, and the whole of the social condition! To meddle with bargains which the law did not prohibit, is evidently taking from engagements of every kind their sacred character. Must we again witness those events and circumstances which display in man that which would never have appeared in him but for the combined effects produced by the overthrow of the hopes of all? . . . My bargains are cancelled, and my advances are not even returned to me. All my property, and all my hopes, become worthless as oak leaves. I must needs take advantage of the law which destroys me, to rid myself of my creditors, who will not the less undergo the common destiny. I have nothing now—neither do I owe any thing. It is but fair that each shall bear his share of the law’s curse . . . Thus, from argument to argument, from necessity to necessity, from abyss to abyss, supported by an insane and generally abhorred law, I am to become a citizen without principles, a man with-

out faith, a merchant without credit, notable by a scandalous proceeding, and a competitor of scoundrels. In such a case, a man shudders at his solitude, he is frightened at his own form, and in the torments of remorse, he looks for the fantastic train of false reasonings and base examples which help to beguile him. But the misfortunes of the guilty, and their crimes, are equally the work of an insensate administration, which, losing at once both its resources and its honour, denies to itself even the means of repairing its abominable faults ; for it would take centuries to regain respect and confidence.’ ”

“ Such, Sir, is in substance, what I said to you ; and this conversation, truly memorable, to myself at least, made the law about to cancel Time Bargains fall harmless from your hands. But this was effected by the fear alone which my zeal excited, and which, assuredly, would not have been limited to private remonstrances. Taking advantage of your extreme propensity to fear, I showed you that your personal ruin, and ignominious fall were inevitably linked with this measure ; and if you have modified your hateful project, it is solely because you dare not carry it any further. Were this not so—if I had enlightened your mind, or touched your heart, you would not, in your last law *, have approached so near to your original intention.”

* Decree of the 26th of October 1785, which was the occasion of Mirabeau writing this letter to M. de Calonne.

PAPER ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

“No sooner was this conference over, than I drew up a summary of it, which may pass for a work. I proved that the embarrassment of the stock-exchange had been greatly exaggerated to you, and would subside by the mere force of things, aided by a little assistance granted with discretion; but that even supposing circumstances to be such as had been stated to you, the application of arbitrary measures was only the way to aggravate them; and that, on this occasion, as on every other, in times of extreme embarrassment as in those of calm, there was no wisdom, nor prudence, nor address, nor policy, nor skill except in the strictest respect for property, good faith, and morality. I proved to you, in fine, that the same injustice attached to the plan of cancelling the bargains—and it was a more crying injustice because a partial one—and that the same consequences, and the same uselessness, would attach to the anticipated deposit of contracts, to a liquidation accelerated by violence, to all your retroactive resolutions; and that the nature of the evil required no other remedy than that of letting it extinguish itself in wise precautions for the future.

“Such, Sir, and I never concealed it from you, is the last service I wished to render you. Had you only hesitated on this occasion, you would have taught me sufficiently that all was to be feared and nothing hoped

from you. To have connected my fate with an administration without principles or morality, would, in my own judgment, have been an offence, almost an infamy. It was but too evident to me that a good citizen could no longer have any communication with you except to oppose your measures. For my own part, I had sufficient reasons to refrain from doing so, and to be allowed to remain silent ; and but for your last act, I would have tried to forget you, even to your very name ; but it may be said that you have wished to carry to the extreme of refinement the care of exciting and justifying my insurrection."

WORK ON THE SHARES OF THE WATER COMPANY
OF PARIS.

"Not long ago I published some observations on the shares of the Water Company of Paris. This work bears my name. It is distributed openly and as matter of public notoriety, at my own house. Nevertheless the Lieutenant of Police, has thought proper to attribute the authorship to M. Clavière *, whom he has sent for, expressed great displeasure on the part of the King,

* Etienne Clavière, a Genevese banker, and a refugee at Paris in consequence of the troubles with which his country was agitated. He is the author of several works on Political Economy, Finances, &c. In 1791, though a foreigner, he was attached to the Legislative Assembly, and was Minister of Finance in 1792. Arrested June 2nd 1793, he committed suicide on the 8th of December following, two days before the time fixed for his appearance before the revolutionary tribunal. He was born January 27th 1735. We shall have occasion to speak of him hereafter.

and commanded 'not to write upon matters of *administration*.'

MY EXPLANATION WITH THE LIEUTENANT OF POLICE.

"M. Clavière was much surprised at hearing such high-sounding terms applied to a pamphlet. Quite a stranger to all administrative questions, and even to the Water Company of Paris, he was not less surprised at being called upon to answer for a work on the title-page of which appeared the well-known name of the author, and one too who never conceals himself. Having given me intimation of this strange circumstance, I immediately waited upon M. de Crosne, and demanded an explanation of a proceeding of which, I really believe, not a second instance could be found.

"This M. de Crosne, Lieutenant of Police, that is to say, this minister of pickpockets, declared to me that, to say the truth, he had received orders to summon me before him,—make known to me the King's displeasure with reference to the pamphlet that had just appeared, and command me to write no more upon matters of administration without being authorised to do so, unless I would force the government to repress my indiscreet censures by severity; but having learnt that M. Clavière was the real author of the book, he had thought it best to send for him, fortunate in being able, by this transposition, to avoid the unpleasantness of making such a communication to me!

"Thus the King's order, if it ever existed — which

I doubt—was transgressed in every sense of the word. I was the pretended culprit—the King had named me, and he directed that I should be spoken to; M. de Crosne, however, spoke to another, and hung upon the head of the other the Monarch's threat, which concerned my head alone. M. Clavière who had not written any book, received an order to write no more books; and the functionary dared to assert that he pursued so strange a line of conduct, from deference to me; that to show me respect he had dared to suppose that I was so devoid of honour and delicacy, as to be eager to acquire celebrity by putting my name to works reputed bold—I know not wherefore—and capable of remaining silent and motionless whilst another was threatened with the danger I had myself incurred . . . Oh! Ministers, Ministers!—What care you take to make the authority hated which is confided to you, to afflict the heart of an honest man, to strike him with dread at the sole aspect of your movements.

“I have shown elsewhere* for what object I wrote the work on the Waters of Paris, and the true cause of the rumours which it raised. I have shown why, by insulting me, profaning the King's Majesty, and offending common sense and justice as well as reason, M. de Crosne attempted to disturb the tranquillity of an honest man, whose age, talents and misfortunes ought

* In the second part of the work entitled: “Reply to the Writer of the Directors of the Water Company of Paris.”.

to have made him respected by government *. I have shown that my pamphlet applied solely to the juggling by which the jobbing was maintained upon the shares of the hydraulic steam-engines, and not the undertaking itself. I have brought home to the conviction of all, that the advantages of this undertaking were not only very distinct from, but diametrically opposed to, those of stock-jobbing.

“ And, indeed, it is of great importance to Messrs. Perrier’s establishment that the price of shares should remain moderate, in order that fresh advances, indispensably necessary to arrive at solid and permanent profits, may be more readily granted by the shareholders. The sellers of shares would, on the contrary,

* M. Clavière was one of the principal chiefs of the popular party at Geneva, whence he was banished by the Aristocrats, with the assistance of French bayonets, during the late revolution. He had the generosity to seek an asylum among those whom he was justified in considering his enemies†. Can the government, without dishonour, refrain from defending, I had almost said honouring, this man, instead of allowing him be troubled or humiliated? The Persians caused to be banished from the little Grecian republics the Citizens who kept alive there the love of freedom; but in their own country they honoured these men, freely confessing by the respect they showed them, that policy alone was the cause of the banishment of those patriots. They were not cowardly enough to seek to stamp the prejudice of crime upon men whose virtue deranged their plans. (Note by Mirabeau.)

† Allusion to the severe measures taken in 1782 by France, against the parties which troubled the City of Geneva, and alluded to by Mirabeau in his letter to M. de Vergennes, already quoted.

mow down, in an instant, and at the expense of the dupes, the hopes of a whole century. To reach such a consummation they exaggerate these hopes, and would fain make people believe that they are giving an inexhaustible treasure at the cost of merely the expense of opening the mine. Such are the stratagems of stock-jobbers ; and this is what I opposed. My paper was therefore the natural consequence of the labours which you urged me to undertake ; and if I required a defender, it was no doubt the duty of the Minister of Finance to come forward as such.

“ But I must be equitable, and admit, that by justifying me you exposed yourself to a storm. Had you defended my paper and professed my principles, the courtiers would have asked you why you had before praised to them these very shares the fictitious value of which I was endeavouring to reduce. The answer might have embarrassed you. . . . However, Sir, this is mere, and perhaps even hazardous, conjecture. The inconsistency, in my opinion, is only apparent ; the reader, before he concludes the perusal of this writing, may perhaps explain it. Perhaps, also, when I have developed the motives and the necessary inefficiency of your decree, it will be discovered that you have been more consistent than you here seem ; that the patron of stock-jobbing at court is not less so in the city, and that therefore my work on the Water Company of Paris must have annoyed him much. . . . But, Sir, if such is the case,

where lie the resources of your own mind and those of your assistants? Why do you not propose to the King to purchase the whole undertaking, all the shares, at the price of four or five thousand livres? No doubt the purchasers at 3600 do not expect less from the royal munificence excited by your care. Assuredly you will then, at least as far as this business goes, have freed yourself from your engagements with the courtiers. I shall then be the person in error; and the hydraulic steam-engine company will only have to congratulate themselves upon the success of their *patriotic* establishment.

“ Be it as it may with regard to the plan I recommend, you cannot be accused, at least in the present instance, of cowardly or perfidious duplicity. You have thrown off the mask with rare candour, and this last circumstance will sufficiently characterise the nature of any future communication between us.”

MEASURES ADOPTED BY M. DE CALONNE RELATIVE TO
MY PAMPHLET ON THE WATER COMPANY OF PARIS.

“ You, and probably you alone, being jammed in between the courtiers whose avarice you have led into error, and myself whose reflections and writings on stock-jobbing you had yourself excited, are the sole author of the cunning expedient resorted to by M. de Crosne, when he transmitted to M. Clavière the pretended commands of the King. But when you were

convinced that 'a word to the wise' was not sufficient for me, that my intolerant pride rendered explanation rather awkward for the Lieutenant of Police, and that with entire submission to orders, I bear very badly advice stamped with menace or a show of authority, you soon felt that I required more positive language, and you spoke.

"A man very dear to me *, whose affection I possess, and with whom the only fault I have to find is his excessive weakness towards you, having so great reason to complain of you,—this man, whose reputation and the services he has done you, have rendered him importunate, and perhaps hateful to you, was sent for to your office; you there requested him to tell me—

"That the Queen is greatly displeased with me on account of my pamphlet on the Emperor's pretensions relative to the Scheldt.

"That the King is greatly displeased with me in consequence of my pamphlet on the Water Company of Paris.

"That everybody at Court is greatly displeased with me.

"That this latter pamphlet has brought the general displeasure against me to a climax.

* The Duke of Lauzun; Armand Louis de Gontaut, afterwards Duke of Biron; Lieutenant-general, Member of the Constituent Assembly, condemned to death by the Revolutionary Tribunal, and executed December 31st 1793. He was born April 13th 1747.

“ ‘ That you defended me during the two first days and deserted me on the third.

“ ‘ That you now learn that the stock-jobbers, dissatisfied with your decree, intended to charge me, or have charged me, to write against it, and to include in the same censure the whole of your administration; that I had either done so or would do so in the most malevolent, seditious, and incendiary form; that I was at liberty to make any attempt in this way that I pleased, at my own risk; only you begged he would tell me how certain I must be that, if in future I gave the slightest ground of displeasure, not only you would not take my part but would have me punished as severely as possible.’

“ In truth, Sir, if the intention is deficient in justice or nobleness, the avowal is at all events remarkably sincere; and I flatter myself that it is now easy to determine the reward to which those may look forward whose talents you employ, the moment their love of truth, or merely your imprudent thoughtlessness, places them in opposition with your petty measures, your petty intrigues, and your petty personal views. . . . But let us examine whether you are very sure of all you have stated.

“ ‘ The Queen,’ you say, ‘ is greatly displeased with me on account of my paper on the Emperor’s pretensions relative to the Scheldt.’ . . . What!—after a year has expired, after I have spent eight months in France,

almost constantly in her sight? after my name having several times made a noise which no doubt reached her? and is it with reference to Messrs. Perrier's hydraulic steam-engine and forty pages of figures on the shares of their company, that this august Princess condescends to express her indignation as applied to a work concerning the pretensions of her brother who has renounced those same pretensions? . . . This, Sir, is palpably absurd, and you alone, not possessing the courage to be brave either at court or in the city, and finding yourself in a rather awkward dilemma relative to the shares of the Water Company;—you alone have called to her recollection the work which she may have looked upon with the feelings of an affectionate sister, without my being blameable in her eyes as an observant citizen.

“What!—the King who knows that I have written with rare energy on even the most delicate matters—who has not disdained to read my works, and even to applaud them as the efforts of a good citizen—who has, I will not say forgiven, but even praised me for showing that the abominable use made of *lettres de cachet* is destructive of all law, all morality, and all equity; the King who, as you yourself have informed me, has expressed great satisfaction at the services I have rendered his finances; the King, a zealous friend to justice;—would he cast the thunderbolts of arbitrary power at the head of the very man to whose

writings he had granted his esteem, because this man expressed an opinion that the value given by stock-jobbing to the shares of the Water Company of Paris, is not the value given to them by calculation and reason? No, Sir, this can never be, and I am the more certain of it because the Count of Vaudreuil, who had the noble courage to lend the King the book on *lettres de cachet*, had no doubt the same courage to defend my pamphlet on the shares of the Water Company, as he would generously have considered it his duty to do, having a great number of copies. If, Sir, any stock-jobbing courtier has imposed upon the King's good faith, His Majesty must almost immediately have been undeceived; and if it is true that he entertains any prejudices against me,—you alone, whose allegations I have refuted, captivating as they were for your friends the courtiers—you alone, who find that my eyes are too good to leave me so near your trestles—you alone, have instilled into him these prejudices.

“What!—everybody at court is displeased with my pamphlet on the shares of the Water Company; and it has brought the displeasure against me to a climax! Why, Sir, we well know the small number of elect whom you have admitted to the distribution of the shares deposited in the royal treasury. These favoured beings are three or four particular friends of your own, and can scarcely be counted among the thirty or forty who are privileged to absorb the whole of your time as

minister of state. These three or four companions of your pleasures are in truth *every body* for you, but not for the Court ; and without offending the modesty of the courtiers, I can scarcely believe that you could purchase the whole of them for eight hundred shares of the water company of Paris. Our great lords bear a higher price, Sir. It is not a paper of figures, a tiresome pamphlet they have, perhaps, never read, which has ‘ brought their displeasure to a climax.’ This unreasonable exaggeration belongs solely to yourself, the indiscreet trumpeter of the shares of the Paris Water Company, you who, in some measure, have made yourself accountable for their success.

“ What !—you defended me during two days and deserted me on the third ! . . . But, Sir, if I am wrong, why did you defend me ?—if I am right, why did you desert me ? Is there not on your part *either* cowardice or prevarication ? Choose either, or *both*. . . . The word is bitter, Sir, but it is deserved : *I will take only one proof in a thousand ; try to overthrow it.* A well written pamphlet appeared a few months since, proposing a plan for distributing in Paris clear and wholesome water*. This pamphlet was published under your very eyes at Paris, and with the sanction of the keeper of the seals. In this

* Plan of a bridge and of a hydraulic machine for a general distribution in Paris of pure and wholesome water, by M. de Forge, &c.

writings he had granted his *g* is much censured. expressed an opinion tha' the use of steam engines jobbing to the shares of ' *es*. He especially ridicules not the value given ' *ying* water into all or most of No, Sir, *r*' He enters into a learned discussion certain of it *b* *omeness* of the water supplied by any the noble *de car* *situated below* Paris, and he promises, in *my* *permission to publish them.* . . . Well, Sir, *b* *complain*, nobody has found fault with this *nobody* nobody has asserted that M. de Forge was a bad *children*, or that his pamphlet was reprehensible. But I am termed a seditious man. The King and his Ministers, the Queen and her courtiers have, you say, cast forth their curse upon my head, and you yourself are preparing for me nothing less than very severe punishments. Why, in the same cause, so different a treatment? Why? — Because M. de Forge has attacked only the water, the undertaking, the means, the execution, the produce, whilst I have attacked stock-jobbing upon the shares of these hydraulic steam-engines. Now, this stock-jobbing has been excited by yourself; and it is from you that the courtiers have received these shares. Was it not, therefore, unavoidable that I should be deserted and condemned? Yes, Sir, it was: this is very clear to those acquainted with you and your connexions.

“What!—you have learnt, and you believe that the

stock-jobbers, dissatisfied with your decree, were to charge me, or have already charged me to write against it, and include in my censure the whole of your administration. . . . No Sir, you never believed this; for who has attacked stock-jobbing so strongly as I have done? Who has better deserved the hatred of the stock-jobbers? Who is further removed from them than I am? Is M. Le Couteulx de la Noraye no longer their chief?—if, indeed, you give up this office to that M. de la Noraye, whose combinations I thwarted, and prevented their success. I write for the stock-jobbers! Why, Sir, at this very moment when you have so grossly insulted me, when you have threatened my safety, when you drive me from my country, my pursuits, my affairs, and my friends; at this very moment, when I have so many reasons for pursuing you as my personal enemy; at this very moment I write against you only because I know you to be a stock-jobber in the city, and the patron of stock-jobbing at court; and because I have never doubted that a stock-jobber armed with authority, a stock-jobber holding a principal place in the King's councils, a stock-jobbing minister of finance, and consequently a party chief in stock-jobbing, is the most cruel scourge that Providence can inflict upon a kingdom like France. And I have written for the stock-jobbers against you! No, I would not have done so; I would not have written even against your decree; I would have

preserved, even to superstition, the remembrance of my connexion with you; and this remembrance would have sufficed to make me think that silence was almost commanded me, of whatever evil you might be the author, in a country where private morality is in eternal opposition with public morality. Yes, Sir!—it is so true, that I should have kept silence, that even after the strange message you were not ashamed to send me by my friend, I asked you in writing to grant me an audience, in which I might have an explanation with you and receive your word, as I would give you mine, if the exchange suited you. I obtained this audience after considerable delay, and at a time when I neither asked nor wished for it any longer. Then it was that the art with which you excused your conduct and discourse, and concealed your projects, showed me that you knew too well I had guessed you for you ever to forgive me, and how much my safety required that I should leave the country. Moreover, not only have I never deceived you with regard to my feelings towards you, but I could not even take upon myself to deny that I was about to withdraw to a foreign land.

“ I have reached this land, Sir, and am secure from your hatred as from your vengeance. Here I am, and I think my connexion with you is severed for ever. You have thrown down the gauntlet, which I have taken up, though less to defend against you my repu-

tation and my rights as a citizen, than the morality of legislation and of trade, the interests of the kingdom, the public thing, in one word—yes, the public thing: for being freed from all personal duty towards you, I should be guilty, in my own opinion, of all the evils you might inflict upon it, did I not endeavour to show, what is very clear to me, that the finances will be ruined by embarrassments of every description, if you remain any longer at the head of them, and that the most solvent kingdom in the world will, by your means, appear the very worst of debtors.

“To prove this, I shall examine the strange law to which you have given so much *éclat*, pretension, and importance; that operation which you consider the master-stroke of your administration. If I succeed in showing that this decree, which places you in evident contradiction with yourself, with what you have required of me, and with the character I assumed before the nation—if I show that this decree tramples equally under foot, reason and good policy, that it destroys public credit, and annihilates the resources of your department, I shall have sufficiently proved that I was justified in thinking I had a right to denounce your too fully proved incapacity, and your irremediable corruption. But I must begin by giving a just idea of the state of things which you have thought proper to oppose.”

We must pause here and our reason shall be heard.

Our mission is to write the life of Mirabeau, and, in this second part of our work, only his public life. It was necessary to mention his writings on finance, and we have given an account of them in his own words. With the exception of the energetic conclusion which we are about to transcribe, we suppress the remainder of this address, the smallest portion of which the reader has just seen, and give only a very short summary of the other developments which it contains, as they would interest none but the very small number of readers who have made the history and science of political finance matter of particular investigation.

In the sequel of his paper, Mirabeau examines “the nature and causes of the embarrassments at the Stock Exchange of Paris.” The minister, he says, imputes them to him, and he glories in them; for if he has caused a *crisis*, he has prevented a *catastrophe*. He defines the different operations of trading in the public funds. He distinguishes three sorts of speculators in these funds: “the capitalists, who act without effort by the simple employment of their real capital, that is to say, the money they can dispose of,” who, in a word, operate with ready money; next, “those who speculate through the medium of circulating paper, such as fictitious bills of exchange,” &c.; and lastly, those “speculators who buy and sell to gain the differences

in the prices of their time bargains." He explains the *modus operandi* of these different speculators. He discusses with much vehemence the decree in council of the 2nd of October 1785, which empowers certain councillors of state, as the King's commissioners, to liquidate "all the time bargains and compromises," the object of which—that is to say, the stock purchased by some and sold by others, must be previously deposited by the contracting parties, or, to speak more correctly, by the sellers, in whose hands the stock remains until payment has followed the purchase. He foretells the lawful resistance of the sellers, to whom both the spirit and the letter of the decree in council is evidently very prejudicial. In the frequent event of there being an impossibility of depositing the stock sold, he maintains that the sellers are always sacrificed to the purchasers. He inveighs against the arbitrary clause which empowers the King's commissioners to "regulate the respective interests of the contracting parties, on the conditions they shall deem most equitable." He asks whether a commission of dependent, removable, and irresponsible magistrates, ought thus to take the place of the tribunals which alone have cognisance of private litigations. He violently attacks the clause of the decree in council, which declares "null and void, time bargains and compromises," the titles and liquidation of which are not submitted to the commissioners.

Mirabeau, next discussed the preamble of the decree in council of the 2nd of October, and shows that the minister made an improper use of the King's name and authority, and even of the treasury guarantee, by applying them to private operations. He ought, says Mirabeau, to have left stock-jobbing to its own resources. It is "lawfully permitted in Holland. and completely tolerated in England, though, for other reasons, the law prohibits it in this latter country. To make the government interfere in a direct form, to prevent thousands of bargains contracted on the faith and signature of the parties, to change the period of payment, and alter the conditions in order to ruin one class of persons and enrich the other," is an abominable and disgusting iniquity. "However," continues Mirabeau, "your decree in council has produced no result. Honest and enlightened merchants, jealous of their honour, did not require it. They have endeavoured to do without your commissioners, who, I apprehend, have not received a single compromise between any two individuals sure of each other's probity.

"Further, none of the payments to be made have been secured by this commission. Either the debtor has given no security, and his situation and that of the debtor remain precisely the same; or, if he has furnished security, the want of legal form, which the commission cannot obviate, places such security in a very equivocal light, for it is subject to the rights and claims

of third parties absent, which also detracts from its value. The commission has felt its own inefficiency, and how greatly its duties further cramp an authority having neither law nor right. Those who have resisted this authority have obtained from it whatever they chose to demand; and it has often destroyed its own work. He who expected equitable arrangements from it, has been deprived of such arrangements by the very authority which at first declared in his favour, and has sometimes ultimately fallen a victim to the most shameful manœuvres."

We here close our summary, and proceed at once to the conclusion of this long letter to M. de Calonne.

* * * * *

"Such, Sir, is the effect of your commission, up to the present time. Would to God I were mistaken! Would to God I could believe that your conduct to me and my resentment have misled me! With what eagerness would I make, I do not say a sterile disavowal, but the sincere declaration that I deserve a punishment more striking even than that which ought to be inflicted upon you; and assuredly this would not be treating myself with indulgence.

"But, alas! in your administration, indications of what we must expect from you are but too certain. What shall we see, if, by an impossibility, intrigue and favour maintain you in office after this exposure of your incapacity? What resources will your silly advisers offer

to raise you in the public estimation? Miserable lotteries to convert our capital into chances, and the royal treasury into a gambling academy? A return to annuity loans, under whatever name you may disguise them, notwithstanding the solemn renunciation of this hateful squandering, made not two years ago? An accumulation of services to devour by anticipation revenues not yet in existence? An increase of the already too numerous body of farmers of the public revenue, of managers and receivers of every description, who, in exchange for paltry advances of the same funds which they have already lent in a different form, will acquire a right to devour the last remains of the people's substance?

“ By such wretched means you will perhaps prolong your precarious administration for a few months—between the assistance of usurers and the dissipation of courtiers. But when the last and sad after-crop of your ministerial harvest is consumed—when general mistrust makes the holders of treasury bills refuse to renew them—when all public and private credit, as regards the King's finances, is exhausted—what will you do? Will you conjure up the ghost of the execrable Terray? But I pause. The reader must already blame me for predicting the misfortunes which your administration would infallibly produce, if it could last. But let him fear nothing: your dismissal will prevent any such misfortunes; or, 'if you remain in

office until they begin, the King's love of his subjects will not suffer you to carry them to a consummation. Your successor will make a great and memorable example of you ; to the very last you will have remained the phoenix of our finances, and credit will rise again from your ashes.

“ What still remains for me to do?—or rather, what have I done? What fruit shall I gather from an attack which, in the timid language of egotism that will soon destroy the little virtue we have left, will be termed ‘audacious?’ What fruit? Either the fall of an unskilful, if not a perverse minister, who is ruining and dishonouring the nation, or else my own proscription! I have weighed the alternative, and accepted its consequences without fear. . . . What should I do in a country where the public authority would be more powerful than justice and truth supported by great courage?

“ Let it not be thought, however, that I condescend to justify myself for having raised my voice in defence of morality and the public thing—amid the consternation of the merchants, and the concert of praises uttered by base flatterers, at every abuse of authority. Shall it be tolerated, that any man shall ruin France by his ignorance, his want of application, and his frivolity? This man, loaded with an odious reputation, acquired with *éclat*, in an age when the dawn of knowledge should have been sufficient to induce his rejection of

an office offered to him by tyranny *—this man, who, by the most tortuous paths, and even by the terror of his name, has reached the helm of state in the most important branch of its administration, would by his stupidity announce to us a return of the greatest calamities! And another man, without any interest, free from intrigue, and having no power but that of reason, no means but his courage, belonging to no party but that of the public good, having no motive but the imperious instinct the invincible desire to sacrifice himself to great and useful truths :—shall this man not attempt to save the nation, undeceive the sovereign, and place upon the head of the guilty minister the full weight of his corruption and incapacity! I shall not hesitate to do so ; if I did, I should insult the King, the age in which I live, and my country !

“ Let the King beware ; he cannot put an end to the career of this minister too soon, or even soon enough ; for the incapacity of a comptroller-general being once known, may endanger public credit, the decline of which is more rapid, and more difficult to stop in proportion to the former impetus of its elevation, and to the increase of strength daily acquired by that of rival nations. What do I say ? Public credit must be completely annihilated, if the finance department remains in the hands of a minister without capa-

* An allusion to the part, not cruel but crafty, which M. de Calonne took in the celebrated lawsuit of La Chalotais.

city. In such an office, talent is sufficient to inspire confidence, which is the only source of credit ; talent is sufficient to satisfy the public opinion, because in all public duties talent excludes dishonesty, whatever be the personal morality of the individual performing them. This is the reason why, notwithstanding your noble exploits in Brittany, if your appointment alarmed for an instant those who believed in the foulness of your heart, your first measures did not the less restore public credit, because they led to a belief that you possessed talent—the real virtue of your department.

“ But at present, when it is shown that your powers of mind consist solely in facility of speaking and gracefulness of language, your talents in the art of never taking a decided step, and in obtaining the suffrages of people of the world by the indefatigable complaisance with which you devote the whole of your time to them ; that, in a word, you have no capacity, that you are unacquainted with even the elements of your calling, and its very language,—I ask, what we have left at the end of one of the most disastrous years that Providence has given us for many years past—at a time when political events threaten us with more than one difficulty in our foreign affairs—when our debts, our embarrassments, and our expenses daily increase in the same ratio in which our resources diminish with the decline of the public confidence, and the decrease of specie, capital, and industry—at a time, too, when the

country has reached the promised term of a tax which the King swore he would not prolong—when the greatest part of the revenue will not enter the treasury, and the remainder be necessarily exhausted in indemnities, on pain of striking with barrenness a territory inexhaustible by any other calamity than that of the King's exchequer, which has drained it to the last drop;—under such circumstances, what have we left as a security for your ministerial operations? That profound immorality which, for thirty years past, has been imputed to you by the whole of Europe, which the recollection of La Chalotais' glorious name still attests, and which even your accomplices have never attempted to gloze over, except by lauding your grace and your amenity, more fatal to the glory of your present administration than your past errors and your recent blunders. Really, Sir, if it be true that you are not cruel (for to be cruel presupposes a certain strength of mind, and all strength, of whatever kind, is denied to you, who possess nothing but the passions of little minds—despotism and vanity);—if it be true that you are not cruel, it is not less true that every principle of good faith, of fidelity to your engagements, of respect to property and freedom, is entirely unknown to you. And yet it is you who hold the great chain of trade, of public engagements, and of every species of property. Such, I attest, Sir, is the dreadful idea that fills me with alarm for the public thing; and this sort

of fear, a real stimulus to the courage of a good citizen, has, much more than the personal injury you have inflicted, determined me to take up the pen.

“ The example I set is a great one ; it is dangerous, no doubt, but it is great because it is dangerous. Virtue supposes strength, glory supposes peril ; it is this which constitutes the only merit that can be attributed to me. . . . What would become of the universal race of the great human family, under the repeated attacks of prejudice, ignorance, and despotism (three words synonymous), if nature did not sometimes produce men able to embrace undertakings requiring energy and exposure to danger !

“ Among such undertakings must no doubt be included that of indefatigably claiming the rights of the public thing, in a country without a constitution and without freedom ; that of striving and co-operating in the spreading of knowledge. Few projects are more dangerous, but none are more deserving of interest and esteem ; for it is from knowledge alone that we must expect the return of the kingdom to a sound state, that we shall derive the true glory and prosperity of the nation. A minister, even when able, has no influence except during the time of his action. Then it is that he almost invariably finds nothing but an effeminate and indolent weakness in those who desire good, whilst those who desire evil oppose him with prodigious force, because his measures tend to their immediate and

personal detriment. He must struggle against the torrent, and sometimes allow it to drift him along, in order to weaken its resistance. Nevertheless, if the man passes, and with him his plans, his views, and his efforts, the knowledge he has brought remains; it ferments, germinates, ripens, and his smallest crop supplies seed for future and more abundant harvests. The office of instructor is therefore a noble one! Yes, Sir, it is sufficiently noble, for ambitious subordinates, for courtiers ambitious of ribands, of governorships, of ministerial office, to find an interest in consulting, listening to, and observing the man of knowledge, who will and can instruct his contemporaries. . . . I boldly avow that I am a pretender to this noble prerogative, and perhaps I have some right to acknowledge this kind of ambition, which pleases my heart without surprising my mind. Every minister whose intentions are pure will encourage me; for I cannot but be willing to second him. The others will look upon me as an implacable enemy, a contention with whom they will soon bring to a close, if ever I fall into their hands.

“But if I fail on this occasion, let not those good citizens be discouraged who cultivate their thoughts, and look upon the art of writing as the guardian of the rights of mankind; let them be assured that my failure proceeds only from want of talents, or from an injudicious choice of circumstances. Let them console me

by their imitation of my acts ; and let them be assured, that sooner or later unworthy ministers will be overthrown, if any one dares to come forward in his own name, and publicly expose their iniquities. In vain will these demigods bellow, in vain will they threaten, in vain even will they strike. Opposition will always lend power to truth, and the pretended shackles which they think they can impose upon it, are only springs hastening its progress. If such people would but refuse being the accomplices of any evil whatever ; if they would dare to divulge all they see ; if they made it their duty to carry the discussion of all the great interests of society before the tribunal of universal reason ; public opinion, seated upon an invariable foundation, would soon govern Kings, who would then be all-powerful for the sole advantage of their subjects, which is the only source of advantage to themselves.

“ But I shall not fail. Our sovereign will feel that some attention is due to a man who, in so serious and open an attack, has not used against his minister the language of ignorance, nor the chattering of presumption, nor the venom of evil-speaking, nor the poison of calumny ; who has laid down facts, established principles, examined arguments, and placed within the capacity of every attentive reader, a question of such magnitude, that it is important for the government to retrace its steps, if it has lost its way. To enforce silence upon such matters by arbitrary power, or

violent measures, is not governing, but lying down to sleep upon an undermined spot of ground, until the explosion takes place which is to scatter the severed limbs of the sleepers.

“ Far for ever from an august prince, distinguished by soundness of intellect and elevation of mind, be the stupid and hateful maxim, that simple citizens ought to be prohibited from scrutinising the acts of the government. This impious axiom has been dictated either by the delirium of tyranny, or the terror of mediocrity. What might not be its consequences? What error would not be holy? What crime would not be sacred? Did you not yourself, Sir, think it necessary formally to give your predecessor the lie in your very first decree in council, after you took office? And did the sovereign authority thereby become less powerful or less revered? Certainly not. It is well known that ministers may deceive themselves; nor are we unaware that they can deceive others; they alone are answerable for their own mistakes, which perhaps is more important in an absolute than in a limited monarchy. Where freedom does not exist, courage is wanting, but fury sometimes breaks forth. Nobody writes against ministers, no one complains of the government, but all consider how they can destroy it, and prepare to do so. These successive fits of torpor and of frenzy, are not suitable to Frenchmen. It is not from the throne, Sir; that they require victims;

they wish only to cherish the sovereign authority, which never appears to them more paternal, more worthy of their blessings, than when it retracts an error committed by one of its agents. But how would it ever discover this error, if the people were not permitted to seek publicly to know what is just, and what is not—what is evil, and what is good? What minister—I call upon all of them to answer the question—would venture to say: ‘I, and I alone, know everything; I, and I alone, cannot make a mistake. Or if I did, why need I care? It is not the public good, but my own office, that I care about. I will not allow the public interest to be ever understood; I will not allow that it shall ever rally the hearts and the strength of the people. I want these ignorant people to be carried away by blind passion against their own interest, and that of their sovereign; for my interest is that both should be silent while I act. May every other interest perish!—May every heart be closed, every tongue palsy-stricken, every hand chained!’

“Such must be the language of a minister, who would venture to impute to me as a crime the freedom of this letter; but such language would not be tolerated by our King. He is a constant worshipper of morality and justice, and would not condemn me for defending their cause, which is his own, since, as he is the guardian and chief of all kinds of property, his first duty is

to establish universal and inviolable respect for property. I have not attacked his authority, but have served his power. I have not maintained the cause of stock-jobbing, as some people would fain represent, but have supported the cause of property, which is the foundation of all justice, of every social right, the sole and inexhaustible source of the prerogatives of the crown. Who would dare to deny that an act of legislation, like that which has just torn five hundred millions' worth of engagements from the safeguard of the courts of justice and the laws, could not, by the same right, by the same means, and upon the same principles, overthrow the rights of all, and force all our social order into combustion ?

“Giving such an alarm to the nation with reference to a recent law, and bringing such heavy charges against the minister who promulgated it, would be a truly culpable act, provided this alarm and these charges were unfounded; but the moment their truth is incontestable, the fact of sending forth such a law, and of making such fearful things lawful, is committing that worst of crimes—treason against the nation. Thus, Sir, you are profoundly guilty, or else I have horribly belied you. This is the question between us. The most ardent of my wishes is to have it decided; and I swear, upon my honour, that I shall always be ready to appear and yield myself a prisoner, the moment the

King will allow his tribunals to determine whether I am a frantic calumniator, or you a prevaricating minister."

The long developments in this letter fully explain, as the reader has already perceived, the occasions and motives of the several writings, by Mirabeau, on matters of finance. All are directed against stock-jobbing, which, by giving an exaggerated value to the shares of the different joint-stock companies, held out a bait dangerous to families, withdrew much capital from the public funds, and more from trade, industry, and agriculture. These different works are necessarily repetitions of each other in a certain degree, as they treat of similar questions, state similar facts, draw similar inferences, foretell the same consequences, and tend to the same object. It is therefore unnecessary to give any further account of these writings, more especially, as at the distance of half a century, the questions they embrace would inspire but little interest and their discussion be out of date. We consider ourselves bound, however, to make a sort of exception in favour of the last work, because it applies to a subject of a more permanent nature than the others; and because the reply to it has not been forgotten, owing to the celebrity of Mirabeau's antagonist.

We shall, therefore, before we conclude the present Book, dwell an instant upon the two pamphlets

relative to the Water Company of Paris, which he published in 1785.

In these works he again attacked the disgraceful practices of the stock-jobbers, who had already tripled, and wanted to increase tenfold, the original price of the shares of an establishment, no doubt useful, but the greatest improvement in which could never, under any circumstances, justify such foolish calculations and realise the expectation of so prodigious an increase in the value of its shares.

This was pointed out in the clearest manner by Mirabeau in his first pamphlet, though in a style somewhat violent and declamatory. A reply appeared from the pen of Beaumarchais, written with much address, talent, and moderation of language, but with great malignancy. He begins by representing Mirabeau as "given up to speculators known to have a great interest in procuring a fall*." He then attempts to refute Mirabeau's calculations and objections; and concludes with an affected lamentation "at seeing a man of such splendid talents devote his powerful pen to the interests of parties to which even he does not belong. It is for disreputable advocates, indifferent to the choice of subjects, to plead a bad cause. The eloquent man has every thing to lose when he ceases to respect himself; and this writer is very eloquent†."

* P. 1.

† P. 53.

The denials, the arguments, the jests, the pretended circumspection, and even the praises of Beaumarchais, roused Mirabeau's inflammable temper to a pitch of fury. He did not perceive that the attack he had made was considerably more insulting than the defence. Before he wrote a rejoinder, he risked a step which we cannot but term ridiculous: he summoned the Water Company to disavow their defender on pain of being made responsible for his assertions. They received this application and disposed of it with the most insulting indifference. Mirabeau then entered the arena, and the choice of his epigraph, which we have already given, sufficiently announced an insulting personal attack.

He began by disavowing the imputation of having embraced the cause of the "speculators on the fall," admitting nevertheless* that not thinking he endangered the interests of the public by feelings of sympathy for private interests which chance might have mingled with them, he had been grieved at the ruinous disappointment of Clavière†, who was exposed through the acts of the stock-jobbers, to pay 4,000 livres for shares of the Water Company, which he was obliged to give for 1600 in consequence of a time bargain made at that rate. But he sets aside this particular fact, be-

* P. 40.

† Another of Mirabeau's friends, whom he does not name, Panchaud, the banker, having speculated like Clavière, was exposed to the same losses.

cause it had not occurred when he boldly undertook the exposure of stock-jobbing, assisted by its wealth, its intrigues, its influences, and by the noble patrons who became its disgraceful accomplices. He glories in his laborious and dangerous mission.

“ Always, wholly, and for ever a stranger to the speculations, even of the most innocent kind, of those gamblers whose trade I abhor, and whose profits I despise, I have wielded during the last six months, with great success, against stock-jobbing (it is a fact which I relate, not a praise I give myself), the noblest and surest of weapons, that of reason. After pointing out its danger, with reference to the shares of the *Caisse d'Escompte* and the Bank of St. Charles, I had still to do the same thing with regard to those of the Water Company, the jobbing upon these last being even more exaggerated than upon the others *.” Setting out from this point, the author refutes his opponent, whom he harasses with calculations and arguments, and with insults which are not the more excusable because they are very eloquent †. He resumes the discussion upon the constitution of the establishment, its simulated expenses, and the exaggeration of its profits. He maintains, that for the supply of one of the most urgent of public necessities, a simple company cannot offer the requisite security for such a service. He foretells (and

* P. 10.

† Pp. 12, 104.

the event has justified his prediction) that some day or other, the supply of water will be taken into the hands of government ; for “ independently of its duties, which are to render all the services for which the tutelar authority is instituted, and in return for which it receives a compensation, the government is, in all respects, the most proper authority to undertake to give water to cities *.” Mirabeau very judiciously censures the idea of providing for an immense population with the water raised from below Paris, whilst it was much more natural to bring it from above.

“ I remember,” he says, “ that on seeking an explanation of the inconceivable selection of the waters of Chaillot, for supplying the Parisians, it was admitted to me, though I had guessed it without the admission, that the Company had fixed upon that side of the town where they might expect to find rich and liberal subscribers, who would set a great example ! It is to this profound consideration of interest, that we owe the ingenious idea of making the river run back, to give us its waters to drink, after it has been used to wash our feet, whilst we might have it to drink just as pure as the Seine originally brought it to us. If all the learned men in the world have said what they are stated to have said †, though they never uttered it, people of common

* P. 16, 17.

† Allusion to the report of the Royal Society of Medicine, dated August 31st 1784, “ on the quality of the water raised and supplied by the steam-engines at Chaillot.”

sense will never be persuaded that the filth of Paris, and of its sewers, is necessary to render the water we drink wholesome: whence it incontestibly follows that the water taken from above Paris should be preferred to that taken from below *."

Lastly, the author predicts that, at a later period, the government, if it does not abandon the Chaillot hydraulic steam-engines, will, at least, seek other sources, more wholesome and more abundant, for supplying the town with water; that, for instance, it will have recourse to the waters of the Yvette, and the Beuvronne †, a prediction since verified, with regard to the latter, by the opening of the canal de l'Ourcq. He concludes his vehement refutation, by returning to the imputations by which his adversary attempted to throw discredit upon his work.

" M. de Beaumarchais returns continually to his 'speculators upon the fall,' for whom alone he pretends that I wrote my pamphlet on the Water Company.

" He forgets that my works on the *Caisse d'Escompte* and on the Bank of St. Charles, were opposed with the very same arguments. These are the only answers that have been made to them

" But where is the book which interested views have not produced? The love of truth, and that of fame, differ from that of money only in their greater rarity,

* P. 41.

† Pp. 81, 89.

and in their belonging to a different kind of feeling. They are nobler, no doubt; but their being noble is not now the question; what we now seek to know is, whether we ought to mistrust every work, every examination, and every analysis, proceeding from an interest of some kind.

“ When have I deserved that an interest unworthy of esteem should be imputed to any of my works? Few men, I am aware, and I will never cease to repeat it—few men have given greater pretence to calumny than I have done or laid themselves more open to backbiting. But I loudly ask, because my conscience gives me a right to do so, what writer can honour himself with bolder principles, more disinterested views, or a prouder independence? My first object, and, far from concealing, I glory in divulging it—my first object, when I devoted myself to my dangerous duties, as an apostle of truth, was to deserve that my long errors should be forgotten. This is the only interest, the only ambition I ever had; and I trust I shall reap the fruits of its success. For what care the public for the errors of wild youth, provided they are repaired in riper years? But woe to those who should take faults long since confessed, cruelly expiated, and perhaps sufficiently repaired, as a pretence for refusing me the respect which every citizen deserves who is constantly occupied in studies, researches, and works connected with the general good!

“ When a public discussion is useful, what matters the kind of interest which has led to it? It is when the interest is concealed—when it shrinks from and repels all critical examination—when, writing nothing, publishing nothing, using only words of artifice, and secret insinuations, which it varies, according to persons and circumstances, it selects the credulous and ill-informed, to exercise upon them, in darkness, the powers of seduction,—then it is that interest may be suspected of dishonest views * By what right, moreover, shall an honest man be forbidden to increase his fortune, by associating himself with the combinations claimed by the public good? Shall he condemn himself to silence for the sole reason that whatever he may say that is true and useful, was first suggested to him by an examination of his own interest? Shall the friend of truth be prohibited from publishing, verifying, or opposing calculations, stating his opinions on matters of public or private economy, because his attention was first called to these subjects by the personal interest of some one of his connexions? If his discussions proceed from such a cause, must they be rejected on that account? Are we doomed ever to remain nothing but ignorant children, girded with the broad band upon which intrigue and quackery have an exclusive right to paint the different shades of their illusions † ? ”

* P. 100.

† P. 102.

Mirabeau's frequent defect, and he displays it strongly in this pamphlet, was to spoil a good cause by language much too violent. This prevents us from transcribing the terrible apostrophe in the last page, though it has been quoted during the last fifty years as the most perfect production of a man who has left behind him so many exquisite specimens of eloquence. We extract from it only a single paragraph, in which Mirabeau does himself a justice that posterity will not refuse him, with reference to his zeal, his perseverance, and his courage.

“ I know of no other merit,” he says, “ than an ardent zeal to serve reason and justice. I never found any talent except in powerful persuasion, any nobleness except in good faith, any virtue except in useful courage; and I have no other wish than that of being honoured, until the grave receives me, both by my friends and by my enemies*.”

We add only a word more. It has often been asserted that Mirabeau's writings on financial questions were suggested and even written by Panchaud and Clavière. With regard to suggestions, the fact appears certain, for the materials he employed were evidently supplied by those individuals. As to the assertion that they wrote the works, we need only read the latter at once to detect throughout the rather uniform manner of

* Page 104.

Mirabeau, who never attempted to vary his style, which always bore his particular stamp. Perhaps he would have failed in any attempt to give it a new form, had time and inclination prompted him to try*.

* Besides what we have transcribed from the letter to M. de Calonne, of Mirabeau's spontaneous admissions respecting the documents he received from his friends, he gives a similar explanation in his preface to the work on the Bank of St. Charles, in page 89 of his letter to M. Le Couteulx de la Noraye, and in page 7, No. V, of his letters to his constituents.

BOOK IV.

SOME time before Mirabeau commenced his journey, he had publicly announced his intention * of proceeding to the North.

All his former biographers have asserted that he went to Prussia on a secret mission, the object of which was to supply the French government with preliminary information that might direct their choice of measures on the death of Frederick the Great, then expected soon to occur—an event that would place upon the throne of Prussia, his nephew, Frederick William II, whose disposition it was necessary to study, particularly as he seemed not likely to pursue his predecessor's political system.

* In page 6 of the "Notice" which preceded the second edition of the work on the shares of the Water Company of Paris; also in page 12 of the Notice at the beginning of the "Reply of the Count of Mirabeau to the writer of the Directors of the Water Company of Paris."

This statement of Mirabeau's biographers is merely an anachronism, being erroneous, not as regards the fact itself, but only the time of its occurrence. At the period of the journey to which we now allude, Mirabeau left France for the sole purpose of writing, without personal danger, his insulting letter to M. de Calonne, which we have here made known to the public for the first time, and which, had it been published as he intended, would have drawn upon him the vengeance of the minister whom it attacked, had he not placed himself beyond the reach of M. de Calonne's power. That it was his intention to publish it, we can positively assert; and its having remained unknown up to the present day, is entirely owing to the prudent obstinacy of Mirabeau's friends, to whom he had sent his manuscript without keeping a copy.

Mirabeau's original intention was to go to Germany, in some parts of which he had correspondents. There he no doubt intended to seek employment, as well as to collect materials for a work which he had previously planned to write in retirement, at Mirabeau Castle; a determination he had abandoned when Panchaud, Clavière, and afterwards M. de Calonne, succeeded in making him apply his pen to financial controversy.

We know not the kind of employment Mirabeau wished to obtain in one of the northern courts: perhaps he had not made up his mind on the subject. Neither can we state the precise nature of the work he had

resolved to undertake, although we have reason to believe that it was one of historical and philosophical speculation. Nevertheless he had not fixed upon the form in which he would produce his theories and opinions. The moment he crossed the Rhine and observed the kingdom of Prussia, he no longer wavered as to whither his journey should tend. The recent rise of this powerful kingdom from an obscure and feeble Electorate, the extraordinary fortunes of this state, now the sovereign, or rather the master of part of Poland, whose vassal it had been for many centuries, and had so remained till very lately—the imposing old age of Frederick II, his vicissitudes, his victories, and his powerful genius ;—all these things acted upon Mirabeau's mind and determined his course. Accordingly, at the end of July 1785, he took the road to Berlin.

The reader may have observed, that in Mirabeau's different journeys some accident always befel him. In the one of which we are now giving an account, an attempt was made to assassinate him. Neither the authors, nor the motives, of this diabolical act were ever discovered, either by himself or by his family.

We extract an account of it from Madame de Nehra's manuscript memoirs.

“ He set out with his horde : it was thus he designated his friend, who writes this, Coco (his adopted son), and his favourite dog. The journey commenced on the 23rd of December ; the weather was dreadfully cold,

but no variations of temperature ever stopped us. Between Toul and Verdun, we were in great danger. Were they assassins?—we knew not; but they were certainly not robbers. I make no comment upon the circumstance, I relate it simply as it occurred. It was eleven o'clock at night, and, notwithstanding the snow, the glasses of the carriage were down. The whole coachful were asleep except myself. On a sudden a pistol was fired into the carriage, which was going at a brisk rate upon the causeway. I made a motion to awaken the Count, saying to him : ' My friend, they are firing at us ! ' At the same instant, two other shots were fired almost simultaneously. A ball hit the carriage, made a bump on it, and fell. There is no doubt that my change of position to awaken the Count, and his in rousing himself, prevented us both from being wounded. They were certainly not robbers ; neither were they experienced murderers. This event is one of those concerning which we can only form conjectures. The postilion did the wisest thing, which was, instead of stopping to inquire whether we were wounded or not, to drive full-gallop to the next post-house, from which we were not very far distant. Here we found our servant, who, as he rode on before us, had seen nothing, but had heard the firing, and was coolly talking the matter over as he waited for our arrival. The postilion refused at first to return by the same road, and we had the greatest difficulty to persuade him that he was not the

person whose life was aimed at, and that, as we had been attacked, it was probable that the same parties would not appear again, as it was natural to suppose that we should acquaint the public authorities with what had happened to us. We continued our route, taking the precaution, however, not to fall asleep. Every one showed a great deal of courage, even the poor child, though he was only four years old."

We continue to borrow further particulars from Madame de Nehra's manuscript.

"Mirabeau remained a few days at Nancy, at Frankfurt on the Maine, and at Leipsic. In this latter city he frequented the society of men of learning, and formed some useful acquaintances. He was not now travelling as a fugitive. He reached Berlin on the 19th of January, and, according to custom, was presented to the royal family. The King, who, at this period, no longer received foreigners, replied with his own hand to a letter written to him by Mirabeau, and fixed a day for seeing him at Potsdam. This surprised the whole court, and excited much jealousy among the French then at Berlin *."

* "He deigned to receive and distinguish me. No foreigner, since his reception of me, has been admitted to his conversation. The last time he sent for me, he had just refused the requests of those of my countrymen whom his military manœuvres had attracted to Berlin."—*Preface to the "Letter delivered to Frederic William I, reigning King of Prussia, on the day of his accession to the throne. By the Count of Mirabeau."* 1787, p. 4.

This audience took place January 25th 1786: the following letter from the great Frederic gives us this information.

“Monsieur le Comte de Mirabeau,

“I shall be glad to become acquainted with you, and I am obliged to you for your offer * of coming hither for that purpose. If you will oblige me so far, the day after to-morrow, 25th instant, and will apply to Major-General the Count of Goertz, I can see you the same day. Meanwhile, I pray to God, Monsieur le Comte de Mirabeau, that he will take you into his holy keeping.

“Potsdam, January 23rd 1786†.”

* From this passage it may be inferred, that Mirabeau does not tell the truth in the preface from which we have just quoted, and in which he expresses himself as follows:—

“Frederic II. called me to him by his own impulse, when I hesitated to trouble his last moments with the very natural desire to behold so great a man, and to escape the regret of having been his contemporary without knowing him.” P. 4.

We have evidence, however, in a letter from Frederic to the Count of Goertz, that the Prussian monarch, on being informed of Mirabeau's arrival, desired to know its cause. Hence it may be inferred, that the traveller was authorised, nay urged, to demand an audience.

“I received, with your letter of yesterday, the packet of books which the Count of Mirabeau begged you to send me. You will oblige me by thanking him warmly in my name. I am, I confess, very anxious to know by what fortunate chance this traveller has come so far; and you would oblige me by letting me know. Whereupon I pray to God, &c.

January 23rd 1786.

“FREDERIC.”

† This letter, which is in our possession, and signed “FREDERIC,”

It seems that Mirabeau felt himself called upon to add, in writing, to the verbal explanations he had given concerning the motives of his journey to Berlin; for the day after the audience, he sent the King a letter, which we the more readily transcribe, because it justifies our previous statements in opposition to those of all Mirabeau's biographers who have preceded us.

“ SIR,

“ I should fear much more to appear guilty of a want of good faith towards your Majesty, than to commit an indiscretion injurious to myself only.

“ When your Majesty did me the honour, yesterday, to ask me if I was going to St. Petersburg, I replied that it was not yet my intention to proceed thither. There were two persons present, and my personal affairs require that my plans should not be noised abroad.

“ Now, that I am speaking to your Majesty alone, I have the honour to state that, having been very ill rewarded for the really great services I have rendered my country in its financial department,—my personal safety and almost my reputation having been endangered by the present Minister, because I would have nothing to do with his last loan, nor assist in his currency operation,—being obliged, during my father's lifetime, to employ my natural activity and feeble talents,—actuated,

is not an autograph. Perhaps Madame de Nehra's recollections deceived her, or the King may have written another, which however we do not find among the family papers.

likewise, with a desire to make myself regretted in France, I have quitted that country, with the leave of my sovereign, but with the intention of not returning thither so long as I am young and able to do something for myself, unless it be to reap the vast inheritance which my father will leave me.

“ Next to the just curiosity which has brought me to Berlin, where I shall probably wait for my brother, who intends to solicit leave from your Majesty to study your military manœuvres, my intention is, I confess it to yourself alone, to go and seek employment in the country which I know to be most in want of foreigners. I shall, therefore, push on to Russia; and, assuredly, I should never select that nation in the rough, and that wild country, did it not appear to me that your own government is too completely constituted for me ever to flatter myself that I could be useful to your Majesty. To serve you, and not sit idly in your academies would have been, Sir, my proudest ambition; but the storms of my early life, and the deceptions of my own country have so long turned my thoughts from this noble design, that I apprehend it is now too late. Deign, Sir, to receive the communication of the project to which I am now forced to confine myself. I was bound to make it, since your Majesty expressed some curiosity to know my destination; but I venture to entreat that your Majesty will keep my secret.”

The following is the King's reply dated January 28th, two days subsequently :—

“ Monsieur le Comte de Mirabeau,

“ I cannot but feel much obliged to you for your confidential communication to me, in your letter dated the 26th instant, of the reasons which induced you to leave your country, with your Sovereign’s permission, and seek, in a foreign country, to employ your talents with greater success. You may rest assured that I will keep your secret, and that I shall always take an interest in the destiny of a man of your merit, sincerely hoping that it will be one of the most favourable, and comformable to your expectations.

“ It depends entirely upon yourself to remain at Berlin until the arrival of your brother, who intends to ask my permission to study the military manœuvres. This intention gives me the greater pleasure because I hope, during this interval, to see you a couple of times more, and assure you by word of mouth of all my feelings towards you. Meanwhile, I pray to God, &c.

“ FREDERICK.

“ *Potsdam, January 28th 1786.*”

We have but few particulars to relate, connected with the period immediately subsequent to this correspondence. The following passage extracted from a collection of letters scarcely known to the public, explains Mirabeau’s domestic life at Berlin.

“ It is very kind of you to inquire about my happiness and state of mind. The latter is too elastic not

to receive many shocks ; but they are shocks composed of enjoyments, and it is very possible that he who has suffered the most has also had the greatest enjoyment. With regard to my domestic happiness, it is great, and tolerably pure, since my friend appears certain of recovering her health. But my situation here is so painful and difficult, that I am in a hurry to change it. I must, however, find other reasons than pain, which has always found me harder than itself, whenever a conviction of being useful has lightened its burthen*."

We add, also, another passage from Madame de Nehra's manuscript memoirs.

" During this journey, Mirabeau did nothing remarkable except a few literary compositions, and his letter upon Cagliostro and Lavater, which was not so successful in France as his other works, because in that country the sect of the Illuminati is not very well known†. Working, as he did, like a day labourer‡, he spent part of his time at supper parties of the most tiresome etiquette. Morning and evening, he saw the persons that suited him best, and among others Mr.

* Letters to Mauvillon, pp. 31, 32.

† We shall notice this work immediately, and also the other alluded to in the same extract.

‡ The same laborious habits attended Mirabeau everywhere, in prison and in freedom, in his own and in a foreign country. Thus, at the period to which we now refer, he wrote :—

" The public are bound to know only what is printed, but they are bound to know all that is printed." — *Letters to Mauvillon*, p. 45.

Ewart, since English Minister, and M. Dohm * whose talents he respected and whose person he loved. He also saw with pleasure Sir James Murray, whom he mentions in a passage of the correspondence from Berlin. I am not aware whether it was during this journey that he published his work on the Jews †; but I know that the first idea of it was given to him by M. Dohm, and as Mirabeau did not find this friend at Berlin in 1787, I imagine that I am not wrong in supposing that the work appeared during his first visit to Prussia.

“ Though our letters from Paris did not reach us regularly, we received sufficient to convince us that the only matter which Mirabeau had left unsettled there, that of his pension, the payment of which was still refused by his father, would never be terminated whilst he was absent. Among other things, we were informed of a rather laughable occurrence. It had been proposed to establish a company for the performance of *errands*. The Savoyards at Paris, had assembled in discontent. One of them got upon a tun, (though you will observe that the mania of making speeches was not yet in fashion), and addressed his companions as follows :

* Christian Conrad William Dohm, historian, philosopher, economist, afterwards Minister of Prussia to the Count of Cologne, to Liege, the Circles of the Rhine, to the Congress of Rastadt, &c. We shall have again occasion to mention this honourable and distinguished man.

† “ On Moses Mendelssohn, &c.,” 1787.

MEMOIRS OF MIRABEAU.

ends?—an injustice is about to be done us, but as not grieve. There is in Paris a man who will support us, and this is the Count of Mirabeau. He ways takes the part of the weak against the strong; little while ago, he saved the water-carriers from starvation, and he will not do less in our behalf: let us go to him.' They all proceeded accordingly to the Hotel de la Feuillade, and asked for Mirabeau. In vain did the host and hostess assure them that Mirabeau had left Paris the day before: they would not believe this, and it was found necessary to open all the doors to satisfy them."

After the first months of his residence at Berlin, Mirabeau had reason to apprehend that the child of his adoption would be taken from him. On the other hand, he received no tidings of the progress of his agents in obtaining for him his only means of subsistence. These two reasons made him determine, much against his wish, to return to Paris. He accordingly paid farewell visits to the royal family, and wrote to the King, who immediately replied in the following terms:—

"Monsieur le Comte de Mirabeau.

"Unexpected circumstances, as I am informed by your letter of the 14th instant, requiring your speedy return to France, you will oblige me, should you let me know when you arrive!

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Accept, in the mean time, my thanks for the obliging things you say to me, and be assured &c.

“FREDERICK.

“*Potsdam, April 15th 1786.*”

We have a succinct but animated narrative written by Mirabeau himself, of the visit which took place in consequence of this letter.

“I was an hour, all but a few minutes, with the King, who was in his arm chair, the morning’s drive having fatigued him. It was performed so rapidly that he killed two of his carriage horses. It is impossible to imagine a fresher head, and a more delightful conversation; but I did not enjoy them at my ease. The extreme difficulty with which he breathed, oppressed me more than it did him. A great man, in a state of bodily pain is a very affecting sight! The nature of his complaint is such, and my emotion was so strong that I was afraid of developments, and avoided, even to superstition, any thing that could prolong a conversation which, at any other time, would have proved the greatest happiness to me. You understand this feeling; and I care little whether or not it is understood by many people. Be that as it may, this extraordinary man will reign to the end, and the sun will retard this end. I set out this evening, after having seen many gardens, much gilding, a few fine pictures, a few beautiful antiques, and a few courtiers. But in this long

review, nothing struck me so forcibly as this man so far above the rank in which Providence has placed him, after forming him on purpose to fill it. I am very glad however of this living proof of what may be done in sand: perhaps some thing or other will profit by it, to bring hither other things besides lakes and statues. Tell Dohm that we talked a great deal about the Jews and tolerance. I would not advise fanatics to show their faces here*.”

We add one more extract from a letter written by Mirabeau whilst on his road to Paris.

“I write to you from Paderborn, where the darkest of nights together with a heavy storm forced me to stop for several hours; and though exceedingly fatigued, I cannot refrain from writing a few lines to her whose image always pursues me. You must have had news of me from Brunswick; for I wrote to Dohm a tolerably long letter which I begged he would let you read. I was received at that Court with great kindness, and even welcomed with distinction, because the King of Prussia wrote in my praise whilst I was still there. But I did not find at Brunswick the only man in whom I

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame de Nehra dated Potsdam, April 19th 1786. M. Dohm had written a work on “The Necessity of bettering the Civil Condition of the Jews;” and this circumstance, coupled with the esteem and favour shown by Frederick to the author, does this Monarch great honour, because the Jews had been very ill-used during his reign. It was this work, as Madame de Nehra states and we shall hereafter show, which gave Mirabeau the idea of writing his paper, “On Moses Mendelssohn.”

took any interest;—I mean the reigning Duke; and of the four days I was forced to pass there, two were spent in *ennui*. I intend to make no more halts: this is imposed upon me by the expense, the tediousness of the journey, and the time, which latter is so terribly consumed by the delays of the postilions and the want of police at the posting houses, that we do not travel more than ten German miles in the twenty-four hours. Besides, I am too unhappy at not hearing from you. As each day, however, brings me news of some fresh event proving a great fermentation at Paris, and as it is only from the first alarm caused by the news of my arrival, that I shall have any thing to fear, I shall spend a couple of days at Tongres with the brothers of the Chevalier Witry: 1st, to concert measures with the Abbé de Perigord *; 2nd, and especially to select those of my papers which must be put into a place of safety, in order that, should any thing happen, they may be forwarded to you immediately for you to make what use of them your prudence and circumstances may dictate, and our friends advise. These are mere precautions of supererogation, and need give you no uneasiness; but certain papers are so essential, that they must be

* Charles Maurice de Talleyrand Perigord, since Prince of Benevento, &c. We shall have occasion hereafter to speak of this remarkable personage, the most illustrious of Mirabeau's friends, and who would also have been the most useful, but for the publication of the correspondence from Berlin,—a publication that caused a suspension of their friendship, which was resumed only on Mirabeau's death-bed.

guarded like the Ark of the Lord. Let this however remain between you and me; for a report, as I have heard, is prevalent at Berlin and throughout Germany, that I should run the greatest risk by returning to Paris, and I should not like the confirmation of this fable to proceed from myself.

“Continue to write to me under the same address, and let several letters at the same time, confirm to me the return of your health. I hope that you have written to Madame Blumendorf, and to some other women, for my worthy enemies will not fail to give out that I have deserted, perhaps murdered my young and charming fellow-traveller, for whom I would give a thousand lives. Dear Yet-Lie, how happy shall I be when I see you again! This short but cruel separation shows me the value, the want I have of your society, and how wrong it is to trouble our internal happiness by wretched illusions and foolish irritability*.”

Before we come to the short stay made at Paris by Mirabeau, after his return from Prussia, let us dwell an instant upon the works he wrote during his residence in that country.

He had been led thither principally by his intention of writing an important work; and although he did not give up this intention, yet he did not cease to feel the necessity of obtaining less tardy pecuniary resources,

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame de Nehm, dated Paderborn, April 25th 1786.

from works of another description. The produce of his literary labours constituted his sole means of subsistence. Far from complaining of this, however, he considered it an honour; for, in his opinion, the very noblest of professions was that of literature, provided they who pursued it properly understood their mission.

“Ah! if they would but honestly devote themselves to the noble calling of usefulness!—If their indomitable self-esteem could but enter into a compromise with itself, and sacrifice vanity to dignity!—If, instead of degrading themselves, tearing each other to pieces, and destroying each other’s influence, they would unite their exertions and labours to overthrow the ambitious man who usurps, the impostor who misleads, and the coward who sells himself!—If, despising the vile trade of gladiators, they would join as true fellow-soldiers against prejudice, lying, quackery, superstition, and tyranny, of whatever kind;—in less than a century, the face of the earth would be changed*.”

Prior to his journey, Mirabeau had prepared some essays, which were to have appeared in a weekly paper conducted upon the same plan as the “*Mercure France*.” In Germany he wrote several others. All of them remained in his portfolio, and it was our intention to have here given fragments from some of

* Preface to the work on Moses Mendelssohn, p. 62.

the best; but so abundant are the materials more directly connected with our work, that we are compelled to omit these interesting extracts.

Mirabeau, in his project of founding a literary journal, had to combat some objections, even by M. de Montmorin, afterwards minister, to whom he wrote—

“I have not the ordinary notions concerning consideration; I give it to those only who deserve it; to virtue, and talent, but not at all to the artificial distinctions of society. Weaned long since from the illusions to which I was called by the chance of birth, accustomed to be myself, and myself only, to estimate myself only by my own opinions, I shall endeavour to qualify myself for every office, and to console myself for not filling any, if your kindness does not some day succeed in overcoming my evil destiny. Truly, the English are as good as we are, if not a little better. Now there is not among them a man of ability, a public man, an acknowledged man of talent, who has not long laboured at those periodical writings, those temporary journals, which our knowledge despises, and which, in every country, have produced great changes in things, great revolutions in ideas, and great effects upon mankind. I cannot feel it derogatory to do that which the most distinguished men in England have done, and still do; and I shall consider that I have not been useless to my country, even in this respect, if the example

of a man whose name, talents, and manner, are not subaltern, should destroy so unreasonable and injurious a prejudice *."

Though Mirabeau's object in periodical writing, was to increase his pecuniary means, he wished to remain perfectly master in the choice of his subjects, whether original articles, or criticisms on other works. But this pretension raised difficulties against which "he erected his bristles like an indocile scribe." This is his own expression.

"Alas, yes!" he wrote, "I am but too well aware that the same circumstances which teach parrots to sing, as well as other birds and birdlings, hungry and talkative like myself, may soon force me to yield, and plunge me into the slough of periodical literature. To write under the dictation of others, about the intellect of others, is not a good system, according to my notions, provided a man have talent of his own. Necessity, however, is a law which none can avoid, and I perceive but too well, that from this time to the period when I shall reap the inheritance which cannot fail me, I must, either voluntarily or by compulsion, work this disagreeable mine †."

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. de Montmorin, dated November 25th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Vitry, dated February 14th 1785. We add some other passages from the same letter.

Soon after Mirabeau had taken up his abode at Berlin, he published a pamphlet entitled "Letters from the

"You know the plan of the journal I purpose establishing, but others will not understand it. It is to be founded upon the idea, novel perhaps, and which, in my opinion, is not without its usefulness, of noticing old books, as the ordinary journals notice new ones. To abridge and select, is now, assuredly, the most urgent want of science and letters. To preserve is of a usefulness less direct, perhaps, or rather less abundant. Nevertheless, in proportion as taste and erudition pass away, in proportion as the mania of writing becomes more contagious, in proportion to the ardour in publishing, the haste with which books are published, the mania or necessity of sacrificing to the taste of the day, to the coryphæi of the times, to the pretension of being free from prejudice—which, in point of fact, is scarcely anything better than substituting one prejudice for another; in proportion, I say, as all these diseases gain upon us, and increase, do we too much neglect the exertions of our predecessors, who, although it should be true that we surpass them in the talent of bringing out, ought not the less to attract our attention, in order that we may set in an elegant framework that which they have clumsily enchased. I say then that this article will yield something, and I invoke your researches in the works of our philologists of the sixteenth century, our learned of the seventeenth, our collections and our compilations of all ages but that in which no books were made except with stolen fragments, well or ill-stitched together, no tragedies except with old hemistichs.

"You know that another of my projects is to give in successive parts a work on the academic collections, more especially that entitled 'Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-lettres.' My plan here is to take the interesting papers of the collection, and unite them by amalgamating and blending them together, by clearing and pruning, and criticising them one by another,—and to draw from this chaos all that is worthy of the attention of philosophers, men of letters, and men of the world, without crushing them by the

Count of Mirabeau to M***, on Messrs. Cagliostro and

weight of a fastidious erudition. This is an undertaking, the want of which is generally felt, and its utility incontestible.

"I intend to include speculative politics, finance, &c., and the little I shall take from recent literature is my own affair. I say 'speculative politics,' because, although I may be strongly solicited, I will never write what Linguet so ridiculously calls 'annals.' The trade of a hussar no longer suits me. It is not, even in this application, compatible with self-respect; for is there not great rashness in giving intelligence of what passes at a distance, and passing judgment upon it, whilst daily experience shows how difficult it is to obtain information of what is passing close to us?"

On the subject of this plan, so often mentioned by Mirabeau, of digging up and concentrating the scientific and literary riches buried in forgotten or neglected works, we add the following fragment, never before published, of the work by Mirabeau, the greatest part of which was published by Soulavie, under the title of "Memoirs of the Duke d'Aiguillon."

"The art of printing has so greatly facilitated the means of instruction, that science has become a very common commodity. But the mind of man may be improved *ad infinitum*. To render the road to improvement easier, and to make the human intellect advance with rapid strides in its progress of discovery—to engender new ideas, and make our exertions more fruitful, a mode is wanting to abridge study, and avoid repetitions, placing the studious man, especially the man of genius, at the point whence he is to start. If, for instance, he who appeared desirous of seeking new discoveries, were to spend his time in studying the Epicycles of Ptolemy, or the Vortices of Descartes, he should be spoken to in the following words: 'This is the point we have reached: Kepler, Newton, Clairreau, Euler, &c., have guessed, demonstrated, and investigated this branch of science; and it is from the point of their discoveries that you must try to advance.' Is this not the case with all sciences?"

Lavater*." His object in this paper is to expose the impudent quackery of the former, and attack the conscientious but dangerous fanaticism of the latter. He here places, in opposition to each other, the hasty judgments passed, in the drawing-rooms at Paris, on Cagliostro, from the circumstance of his being implicated in the affair of the necklace, and those of his partisans, who hastened to justify and acquit him before the courts of justice had tried his case. He recommends the respect due to the forms of justice, whatever may be their imperfections, which imperfections he however makes evident by describing and eulogising an English jury. Refraining from taking either side in a cause still pending, and proceeding from the private litigation to general remarks upon the impudence of the Thaumaturgists and the credulity of their dupes, he unfolds the system of imposture by means of which Cagliostro usurped a great reputation for knowledge, wealth, and beneficence, and obtained recommendations from such grave and circumspect ministers as Messrs. de Vergennes, de Miromesnil, and de Segur. He discusses the public testimony to which Cagliostro and his friends attach the most importance, that is to say, a pretended

* Berlin. François Lagarde, March 25th 1786: 75 pages 8vo
with this epigraph:
... carminibus quæ versant atque venenis
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account given in William Coxe's work on Switzerland, and appearing in Ramond's translation of this work, of Cagliostro's acts of benevolence and the miracles he performed at Strasburgh in 1780. Mirabeau proves that this statement does not exist in the original, and is a mere interpolation by an imaginary translator, or at least by one under a borrowed name, or rather by Cagliostro himself. He quotes some passages written by the learned professor Meiners, for the purpose of unmasking Cagliostro. Mirabeau then expresses his surprise at the connexion between a quack, thus proved to be an arrant cheat, and a minister of the gospel like Lavater, of whom the author draws a portrait, containing much more of antithesis and witticism than of justice and truth. Admitting the good faith of the Zurich doctor, he insists upon his puerile credulity and his exaggerated mysticism. He quotes the serious description written by Lavater of the magnetic process, by which he declares that he cured his wife of a complaint till then incurable. He shows Lavater energetically defending the jesuit Gassner, who boasted that he cast out devils, and the juggler Schroepfer, who conjured up the dead; also Cagliostro himself, whom Lavater believed and justified, without however approving of every thing he did. Mirabeau bears principally upon the blind faith which led Lavater to believe in miracles, which, he alleged, that any true christian could and ought to perform; further, in his "capacity

of the born enemy of quacks and a crusader against their success," Mirabeau comes to the conclusion that it is his duty openly to attack such "philosophico-cabalistic christianity, which leads straight to fanaticism and intolerance." He further observes, that Princes, more especially absolute Monarchs, are sufficiently surrounded with illusions injurious to the people whose fate is in their hands, to justify access to the throne being refused to those intrigues and seductions the effects of which his philanthropic zeal foresees and would counteract *.

In closing this analysis, we shall speak by anticipation of a work which was not published till the following year, but which Mirabeau wrote at Berlin about the month of July 1786. We notice it in this place, in order to cause no interruption hereafter of what we shall have to state concerning subsequent events and works which cannot be separated, and which we are bound to notice at considerable length.

The production to which we allude is thus entitled: "On Moses Mendelssohn, on the Political Reform of the Jews, and in particular, on the Revolution attempted in their behalf, in 1753, in Great Britain †."

This, in our judgment, is one of the best of Mirabeau's works. It had its origin in the letter on Cagliostro and

* Proof of this is in his letter, dated August 16th, to Major Mauvillon, his coadjutor, or rather his partner, in the great work on the "Prussian Monarchy," and to whom Mirabeau applied for the materials of a biography of Mendelssohn.

† London, 196 pages, 8vo.

Lavater, of which we have just given an account, and afforded the author an opportunity of treating fully, by the aid of the book of a friend *, one of the subjects most suitable to his ardent philanthropy, his love of freedom, his taste and skill in oratorical controversy, and in handling the higher questions of philosophy and politics. In this paper he displays the same qualities that appear in all his writings of a similar description ; but here they are of a superior cast. His reasoning, more methodical here than in his former works, is also much more clear ; the distribution of his arguments and proofs is better proportioned to the respective importance of the different parts of the work ; the style is more serious, more even, and more correct, without losing any of its appropriateness and character. There is a total absence of turgidness, of artificial warmth, of invective, of declamatory exaggeration. In our judgment, this book has no marked fault ; and we are not to attribute it to the forgetfulness of posthumous editors, who have republished works that contained, no doubt, more passion but less talent, more brilliancy but less usefulness, we are at a loss to account for this paper on Moses Mendelssohn not being one of the most popular of the writings that Mirabeau left behind him.

The musician Reichardt, one of Lavater's numerous disciples, thought proper to reply to Mirabeau's letter

* "On the Improvement of the Civil Condition of the Jews," by M. de Dohm. 1781.

on his master and Cagliostro ; and in support of insufficient arguments, he had recourse to falsehood and personalities. Mirabeau, in a vehement answer to M. Reichardt, protests that he never had any communication with Lavater ; and on the other hand, without denying his errors and misfortunes, he shows that neither the one nor the other have any thing to do with the question. He replied with much more moderation to Brissot de Warville *, who, in his admiration of the Illuminati, without sufficient information, and even without having read, or at least understood, the letter on Cagliostro and Lavater, imputed to him as an offence his having written it. Lastly, Mirabeau replied, also in measured terms, to a third and anonymous opponent, but who was known to be the Landgrave of Hesse Homburg ; and dwelling, with more ample particulars and stronger arguments, upon the dangers of the Illuminati, of whom Lavater was one of the most fervent and accredited chiefs, Mirabeau deduced, from the very rank of their present defender, a confirmation of one of the most justifiable grounds for his censure, the object of which was to put sovereigns upon their guard against the dangers of an intolerant and fanatical sect, of which, as the author had himself personally witnessed, the

* A celebrated conventionalist, born in 1754, and beheaded in 1793. We shall have occasion to mention him in another part of this work.

Prince Royal of Prussia, afterwards Frederick William II, was one of the blindest dupes.

With reference to some verbal chicanery, Mirabeau, in his work on Mendelssohn, proved his extensive knowledge of the German language* ; on which occasion he points out, too largely perhaps, but with the greatest lucidity, the advantages resulting from the study of foreign idioms, a study which, in his opinion, is very

* The autograph manuscript before us is a proof of this knowledge. Chaussard, who, as we shall show elsewhere, speaks in a very erroneous manner concerning the means employed by Mirabeau to obtain the materials for his "Prussian Monarchy," has also dreamt that Mirabeau did not understand German. This is his statement on the subject:—

"Among other documents, Mirabeau had procured a secret statistical table of Germany."—[Where there are no secret statistics.—ED.] "The difficulty was to translate it ; but his favourite maxim was 'that a man can do any thing he chooses.' He gave a proof this ; and with a secretary who could not speak a word of German," [this secretary was the Baron de Noldé, a German by birth.—ED.] "a German *valet de chambre* who did not understand French, and the help of a dictionary, he translated this statistical table, and sent copies of it to Louis XVI."—Page 50 of the "*Summary of the Life*," placed at the beginning of the work entitled "*Esprit de Mirabeau*." We repeat, that a perusal of the work on Mendelssohn, and that on the "Prussian Monarchy," are alone sufficient to show that Mirabeau had deeply studied the German language.

The fable invented by Chaussard is repeated by Cadet-Gassicourt, page 24 of the second edition of his "Essay on the Private Life," &c. ; and this is the more singular, because Cadet-Gassicourt complains of his having been copied by the very writer he himself copies. The same story has found its way into the "Biographie Universelle," page 95 (2nd col.) vol. xxix.

improperly neglected by the French, who depend too much upon the universality of their language. Then, taking up the principal subject of the work, the author, after a magnificent eulogium on Lessing, comes to Moses Mendelssohn, his principal pupil, who had died three months previously *. He now gives the singular history, and draws the most interesting picture of this man, sprung from a race still despised, and formerly degraded and proscribed, who, though deformed, infirm, sickly, and devoted, from the extreme poverty of his obscure family and the contempt into which his race had fallen, to ignorance and misery, had nevertheless elevated himself by means of practical morality to the most sublime philosophy; who, by the richness of his imagination, had acquired an eminent rank in literature; who, by his knowledge, had helped the progress of science in an already advanced stage of civilisation; and who, by his deeds of charity, had become the apostle of benevolence. By the credit of his name he obtained patronage for those of his own sect, over whose instruction and moral improvement he exercised the highest influence. Mirabeau praises and reviews the principal works of Moses Mendelssohn;—among others, his *Phædon*, imitated from Plato, whose soul and imagination live again in his imitator; his demonstration of the immortality of the soul, “so consolatory to virtue, though she can do without it,”—a demon-

* January 4th 1786, at the age of 57 years.

stration supported by the authority of Leibnitz, Wolf, Kant, by all the resources of the strictest logic, and by all the inspirations of the purest morality; and his “Jerusalem,” an admirable theory of religious tolerance. Mirabeau remarks on this subject the interesting concordance between the principles and expressions of the poor and obscure Jew, and two great authorities which he could not have known*. He gives an account of the persecutions endured by the author of

* The learned reader will be perhaps surprised to find in this brief and rapid summary, the preamble of the act constituting the republic of Virginia, which, in the beginning of the present year, had established throughout its territory absolute freedom of religion, and the *exposé* of principles, by M. Turgot, on religious toleration, such as it exists in his life lately published. In fact, I have, strictly speaking, done nothing but transcribe these two pieces; but I have done so because it would have been impossible for me to explain more faithfully Mendelssohn's theory, and to give with greater accuracy the substance of his book. This agreement between a statesman who had deeply meditated upon human affairs, a legislature so distinguished as that of Virginia, which had performed such noble deeds, and a private individual—a poor Jewish philosopher,—who certainly had never communicated either with the French philosopher or with the members of the American legislature, but by the sole power of a sane and methodical system of reasoning had come not only to the same conclusions, but had used the very same arguments;—such an agreement, I say, ought to be considered a very conclusive stamp of truth. Be that, however, as it may, Mendelssohn's ‘Jerusalem,’ the second part of which contains some curious developments concerning the Jewish religion, or rather concerning the manner in which the writer conceived it, deserves to be translated into every language in Europe.”—Pp. 27, 28.

a work full of such lovingkindness, from even the spiritual chiefs of his own sect ; and this is perhaps the principal motive that induced Mirabeau to write the first part of his work. He next relates a thoughtless step taken by Lavater under the excitement of his enthusiasm. Having translated the "*Palingénésie*," into which Bonnet had introduced an evangelical demonstration of the Christian religion, Lavater thought proper to dedicate his translation to Moses Mendelssohn, and entreat, or rather publicly call upon him either to refute this demonstration, or to abjure the Hebrew creed. Mirabeau points out the rashness, not to say cowardice, of this public appeal by a minister of the ruling religion, to the venerable representative of a nation proscribed during so long a period by a thousand ever-reviving prejudices, and still scarcely tolerated. He gives an account of the reply, full of moderation, unction, and skill, published, with even Bonnet's approbation, by Mendelssohn, who, though remaining within the pale of his own religion, knew how to respect that of others, and even tried to promote peace between the different sectaries of the faith he would not embrace. Mendelssohn contented himself with demanding equal protection for every form of religion which was sincere in its doctrines, and was peaceful and moral. He concluded by declaring that, although he did not decline a discussion, still he thought himself bound by prudence to elude it, though quite ready to

maintain it if compelled ; a declaration, let it be said, of which no notice was taken by Lavater, or any of his fiery disciples.

After these first testimonies of deep interest, Mirabeau enters at once into his principal subject, the necessity of a political reform in the condition of the Jews. He states the persecutions which, at every period of their history, they have endured in their form of worship, in their persons, and in their properties. He exposes the unjust and severe reprobation which they have suffered even since the term of their proscription, together with the state, sometimes of humiliation, sometimes of mistrust, but always of constraint and restriction, to which they are reduced almost everywhere. He asks whether the iniquities cast upon them are explained by their religion ? Certainly not : for much of the old intolerance has been dispersed by the light of knowledge, and their religion contains no anti-social principles. Is it explained by their obstinacy in confining themselves to their own ceremonies and usages ? Certainly not : for there are other sects no less exclusive. Besides, have they not some reason to be proud of these ceremonies, rites, and usages, which twenty centuries of persecutions have been unable to eradicate ? Is it explained by their intolerance ? Certainly not : for what other communion is not equally intolerant with regard to other communions ?—and why should the law, which has no concern with religious belief, fear the

intolerance of one sect, and have no apprehension concerning that of every other sect? Is it explained by the state of their morals? Certainly not: for the Jews are a moral and religious people, chaste in married life, good parents, and good children. Is it explained by their vices? Certainly not: for they have not more vices or less virtues than the nations who spurn and ill-use them. Is it explained by their covetousness, or want of faith? This is taking the effect for the cause. Are not their covetousness and want of faith the necessary consequences of the tyranny which refuses them all respectable means of obtaining their livelihood, and prohibits their following any liberal and respectable profession? How can we demand from them obedience to laws whose safeguard is denied them, or to the authority by which, far from being protected, they are oppressed?

In support of these considerations, Mirabeau enumerates the misfortunes with which the condition of the Jews is still charged. He shows that they are wholly excluded from some northern countries, scarcely tolerated in others, and borne upon by vexatious restrictions and mistrust; and all this everywhere except in Holland and in England, where they are worthy and useful members of society, because they are kindly treated,—where they are laborious, prudent, regular, honest, because they are free and unmolested, and because they are allowed to be happy.

“Supposing, however,” he observes, “that they did not immediately appear entirely worthy of the complete adoption which justice and humanity claim for them ; is it not clear that their descendants will soon be worthy of it, and will largely repay the benefit ?

“The colonists attracted to and welcomed in the several European states, since religious persecution has gone out of fashion, are, for the most part, men of no capacity or industry,—imbecile children, who fancy that a foreign sky is more serene than their own, and trust that they shall spend in idleness many happy days under it. Not a few of them are wretches who have fled from the sword of justice, or worthless vagabonds who cost the state much more than they produce. But many among them leave children who, forgetting the vices or the prejudices of their progenitors, produce a generation of good citizens, sufficient to indemnify with usury the country adopted by their forefathers. Thus there is no government that does not encourage the arrival of colonists. And yet all countries spurn the Jews ! How inconsistent ! . . . Can any sensible man suppose that the emigrants, Puritans and Quakers, who peopled North America, are to be compared to those who have founded the most flourishing empires that have adorned this globe ? Certainly not. It was with corrupt morals and knowledge as limited as their wealth, that the greater number of these poor wretches went to the New World in search of a condition of

which they had, perhaps, rendered themselves unworthy in the Old *”

Mirabeau next quotes the English act of Parliament of 1753, conferring upon the Jews the power of being naturalised, without previous abjuration. He states, and developes the arguments published for and against this measure; the latter stamped with intolerant and fanatical prejudices, and with national selfishness as thoughtless as it was unjust; the former strong in reasoning, supported by justice and humanity. This act of Parliament was no sooner passed than it was repealed, thanks to the pusillanimity of the administration, which the author accuses with as much energy as justice. He then proceeds to refute Michaelis, a learned but prejudiced writer, who revives against the Jews all the old arguments dictated by intolerance and fanaticism. Mirabeau here quotes and strengthens the arguments adduced in refutation of this writer by Mendelssohn, and concludes with the following passage.

“ I exhort the adversaries of the Jews, (would the word *enemy* were banished from every language!) to examine with good faith, whether, in this important discussion, they have not always justified oppression by its own consequences, looked for the cause in the effect, calumniated instead of explaining, supposed instead of proving, and replied with predictions. I exhort them to ask themselves whether it be not an act of

* Pages 82, 83, 84.

very reprehensible levity to support, by frivolous and hasty objections, by facts very doubtful, if not positively untrue, and by base and gratuitous suppositions, so barbarous a prejudice as that which separates from the rest a numerous portion of the human species, and degrades them below the rank assigned by nature to her children. In moral problems, it is nature that should be consulted; it is upon general arguments, upon primitive and original data common to the whole race of man, that we must decide.— Human nature is everywhere the same. The Jews will be the same as other citizens in those states where they have the same rights, and where the same obligations are imposed upon them. Admitting it were true, that some evils might arise from a political reform in the condition of the Jews; admitting that their moral and physical regeneration required a little vigilance in the police, and a little paternal care,—is the government instituted for any other object than such vigilance and such care? Has it any duties more sacred, any more important interests? No assuredly: it would itself censure any one who should allege that state reasons required its being at once cruel and timid, and that it should banish and oppress foreigners. Let us go further: that government would accuse itself of ignorance, impiety, or inactivity, which should avow its want of power to restore good morals and propriety of conduct to a people who had lost them in the suffer-

ings inflicted by oppression, and who would infallibly recover them by more equitable treatment; for, even independently of the regeneration of the Jews, it requires only an efficient police and a few simple institutions, to facilitate the passing from one to the other of these conditions*.

“ Do you mean to say that the pretended vices of the Hebrews are so deeply rooted, that they cannot be eradicated, except in the third or fourth generation? Very well!—begin immediately then: for this is no reason why you should defer the great political reform of one generation, since, without that reform, a corrected generation will never exist; and the only thing you cannot regain is lost time †.”

* Pp. 129, 130.

† P. 140. It may be asked how it happened that Mirabeau, who so warmly pleaded the cause of the Jews, less humiliated and persecuted in his own than in other countries, did not come forward as the champion of the Protestants, who did not recover their civil rights in France till two years subsequently. Mirabeau, however, had not neglected a cause so worthy of himself. The following passage was written by him even when he was confined in the donjon of Vincennes:—

“ The Protestants have no civil condition in France. Every just man must shudder at this fact. Setting aside all discussion on tolerance, and without purposing to favour, the least in the world, the exercise of the reformed religion, or to admit to public offices those who profess it, I ask, at least, why they cannot obtain that which is granted to the Jews from one end of the kingdom to the other—that which Protestant Princes never refused to the Catholics, nor even the Pagan Emperors to the Christians whom they persecuted,—I mean legal means of securing the condition of their

We consider ourselves bound to give some development to our review of this writing of Mirabeau's, which is at the same time the performance of a good action, and a work of high talent. He partly reaped the fruits of it, by the good it produced. At least, he thought it produced good ; and this persuasion, which was a just reward, is attested by the following letter, which he wrote to Madame du Saillant, inclosing a copy of the work.

“ I have now, my very dear sister, redeemed my pledged

children ? After the revocation of the edict of Nantes, it was barbarously or madly thought, that by avoiding any explanation on this subject, so painful an uncertainty, added to other vexations, would bring about the conversion of the Protestants. Nevertheless, they were allowed to marry. The government pretended to believe that there were no more Protestants in the kingdom, and this silly fiction was considered a masterpiece of state policy. The declaration of the 7th of April 1736, on the burial of those to whom ecclesiastical funeral rites were not granted, led to a hope that the government would take some steps concerning births and marriages. Public expectation was, however, deceived. Since 1740, more than four hundred thousand marriages *in the desert* are calculated to have taken place, which is a fruitful source of scandalous lawsuits and dreadful iniquities. In whatever way the courts of justice, jammed in between the natural law and the letter of the positive law, decide in such cases, their decisions are attacked, and the result of their judgments is as uncertain as the contents of the judgments themselves. The security, the civil condition, and the fortunes of two millions of citizens depend upon the very changeable systems adopted by the government, and fresh emigrations will consummate the evil which former irreparable losses have occasioned to the country. Let people again assert that the laws of Louis XIV against the Protestants have fallen into disuse, and that it is therefore unnecessary to repeal them ! ”—*Lettres de Cachet*, vol. ii. p. 154.

word ; think now of redeeming yours. I hunger after some chat with you.

“ You must recollect that the preface to the Mendelssohn is solely adapted to the meridian of Germany, and that I recommend to your attention the work only which is obtaining at this moment an affecting victory. The King of Prussia is occupied in giving civil liberty to the Jews, and my demands do not surpass his concessions *.”

Before we began a digression, which we thought necessary, in order to make known to the reader the nature of Mirabeau's labours during his first residence at Berlin, we stated that his affections as well as his domestic affairs induced him to return to Paris, where he arrived May 22nd 1786.

The public attention was then wholly occupied by the prosecution of the Cardinal de Rohan, on the occasion of the famous necklace. Mirabeau's letters, now before us, allude continually to this prosecution, and in a sense unfavourable to the Court.

He justly reproaches the Court with imprudent and blind precipitation, in undertaking a rash prosecution, at the risk of weakening the prestige, hitherto considered sacred, of the royal majesty, and of increasing the dangers by which the throne was already approached, and would soon be surrounded. We transcribe from

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated June 8th 1787.

these letters only a single passage, which, by showing the popular effervescence which Mirabeau witnessed, explains the prophetic inferences drawn by his strong and penetrating mind.

“ At ten o'clock *, a simple decree of discharge was rendered. So early as five in the morning, the populace inundated the neighbouring streets, and all the halls of the Palais de Justice. I know not by what issue the Parliament would have made their escape if they had decided wrong. The mob stopped, caressed, and kissed them : five hundred individuals prostrated themselves before them—it was a delirium. And indeed, might not the danger so madly incurred by the passions of masters, who ought to have no passions, or who, at least, ought to conceal or to conquer them—might not this danger, made a pretence of by ministers, become one to the commonwealth?—and has not public opinion, which displayed passion in its turn, obtained a signal triumph? Thirty years ago, the Cardinal would have been lost beyond redemption; for in those days the public authority would have covered absurdity with tyranny. Fortunately, it can do so no longer. The test is severe, but decisive. May other passions not make an undue use of it †.”

The friends of Mirabeau, who eluded his strong

* The decree was dated May 31st 1786.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame de Nehra, dated June 1st 1786.

desire to publish his letter to M. de Calonne, had their private reasons for so doing. These friends were Panchaud, the Duke of Lauzun, and the Abbé de Perigord. Being also on friendly terms with the minister, they had long entertained a hope of inducing the government to confer upon Mirabeau a public employment, assorted to his birth and talents. His journey to Prussia, his reception there, and the honourable pursuits he had there followed, gave them what they deemed a favourable opportunity of urging their wishes. They pointed out the advantages which diplomacy would derive from the residence of such a man at Berlin, at a time when the expected death of a King, who had reigned forty-six years, and the accession of a successor who was supposed favourable to a totally different system of politics, might lead to some very important changes in the connexion between the great European powers. These representations were listened to; and whether from the confidence placed in Mirabeau by M. de Vergennes and M. de Calonne, or from fear only on the part of the latter, it was determined that Mirabeau should be employed by the government. In compliance with a demand made by the ministers, he sent them a paper "On the actual State of Europe," dated June 2nd 1786. He was immediately furnished with instructions; on the 3rd of July he set out for Prussia; and on the 10th he was at Brunswick, on his way to Berlin.

For the better understanding of what follows, we here give a rapid analysis of this paper, which is placed at the head of the correspondence from Berlin, so unfortunately published two years subsequently, under circumstances which we shall explain in their proper place.

Frederick II is near the term of his glorious life. His successor, who has personal causes of complaint against the Emperor, Joseph II, has every thing to fear from the unquiet and turbulent, fantastic and fickle, but innovating and ambitious disposition of this sovereign, whom absolute power, and the secret assistance of Russia, supply with the means of doing harm. His views, like those of Catherine II, tend to realise the "Oriental system." The Emperor adheres to this system, because he finds in it facilities for invading Italy, and overturning Germany; and the accomplishment of his plans, whether partial or complete, would destroy the equilibrium of Europe.

Frederick William, the successor of the dying King of Prussia, is threatened in his possession of Silesia, and even in the political existence of his kingdom, by the Emperor's projects, the connivance of Russia, and the dying agony of Poland. But, for his defence, and, perhaps, for offensive warfare, he has the best filled exchequer, the best army, and the most skilful general in Europe.

Thus, the best interests of Frederick William direct his views towards France. But he is displeased with

France, because she has shown but little respect towards his brother-in-law, the Stadtholder. The English will avail themselves of Frederick William's feeling, to trouble the peace of the Continent. They are making considerable armaments. They are encouraging the internal dissensions of the Dutch, who are the only rivals of their distant commerce, and whom the force of events will render, sooner or later, either the allies or the victims of England. The English are closely connecting themselves with Russia, which gives them the monopoly of supplying its naval stores. They are encouraged by the disorder in the French finances to wage against France a war of hatred, reprisals, and ambition. Europe is therefore labouring under a disquieting crisis; and what means of defence has France against its effects?

Two hundred and forty millions of livres, raised by anticipation—sixty millions of annual deficit—its public funds depreciated—stock-jobbing another source of its ruin—the exhaustion and discontent of its population—discouragement in trade—discredit in foreign countries, disunion at home—a navy almost dismantled—an insufficient army—the useless alliances of Spain and Switzerland, the doubtful alliance of Holland, and the suspicious alliance of Sardinia—an inactive diplomacy—and an incapacity to preserve peace, or carry on war.

It is true that France has inexhaustible resources;

but she must be better warned and better served. It is expedient to attempt an accommodation with England, and an offensive and defensive alliance with Prussia : in a word, her external and internal affairs must be properly settled.

The government were much struck with this concise and substantial statement, written with a freedom and boldness which may be naturally thought strange, but which the author characterised by saying that he sent the paper " as a free man, not as a courtier." Mirabeau was immediately sent off to Prussia, and on the day after his arrival, July 12th 1786, he began a correspondence, which he continued to carry on without interruption until January 9th 1787. This correspondence consists of sixty-six letters, principally addressed to the Abbé de Perigord and the Duke of Lauzun, who acted as intermediate agents between him and M. de Calonne.

However ill-assorted the medley contained in these letters, they appear to us to treat fully enough of all that could interest the parties to whom they were written. They further prove, that Mirabeau had a very remarkable talent for diplomacy. This talent, in fact, constantly displayed itself in his conversations with those friends to whom he unbosomed himself, and who have stated this to ourselves, for we have known several of them : M. de Pellenc, the principal of them, was alive but a few months since.

In his very first letter, Mirabeau begins to relate the

then rapid progress of the King's disorder. Of the death of Frederick II, which took place August 17th 1786, he speaks in the following terms:—

“ The event is consummated, Frederick William reigns, and one of the greatest minds that ever filled a throne has been broken, at the same time with one of the finest moulds that nature ever formed *. His complaint, which would have killed ten men, lasted eleven months, almost without intermission, from the first attack of suffocating apoplexy, from which he was relieved by emetic tartar; and as he came to himself he uttered, with an imperious gesture, the words ‘hold your tongue!’ Nature tried four different times to save this rare composition; so that it may be said she did not abandon one of her most beautiful works until after the total destruction of organs worn out by age, continued tension of mind and soul during forty-six years, the fatigue and agitations of all kinds which distinguished his magic reign, and a most prostrating disease. This great man died August 17th, at twenty minutes past two in the morning; and on the 15th, when, contrary to his constant habit, he dozed until eleven o'clock, he performed his usual routine of labour, though excessively weak, but without failing in his attention, and with a presence

* “ Secret History of the Court of Berlin, or Correspondence of a French Traveller,” &c., vol. i. p. 91. Mirabeau, who often copied himself, has used the same passage in one of his letters to Mauvillon, p. 12.

of mind and a conciseness exceedingly rare in any other Prince in full health Two-thirds of the Berlin people are now torturing their brains to prove that Frederick II was a very ordinary man, almost inferior to others Oh ! if his large eyes, which conveyed, at the will of his heroic soul, either seduction or terror, did but open for a moment, would these stupid flatterers have the courage to die of shame * ? ”

Mirabeau gives an account of the accession of Frederick William ; and in his narratives, his observations, and his conjectures, he successively draws a portrait of that monarch who of his uncle's royal qualities possessed only physical bravery. From a repugnance, originating in personal resentment, and still more from the instinct of mediocrity, the new King was eager to swerve from the administrative and political views of his predecessor, without skill either to invent or to accept another system. With the want of being directed and governed, he had a particular dread of being directed and governed, or rather of appearing to be so ; and to this silly fear he sacrificed the natural means and aids which circumstances had placed in his hands to enable him to continue the beautiful reign of the great Frederick, and to improve the constitution and consolidate the power of a monarchy established, not by time, but by force and stratagem, war and diplomacy, and which therefore

* “ Secret History of the Court of Berlin,” vol. i. pp. 215, 216, 217.

and more of splendour than of real consistence, more acquired glory than of assured stability.

The means which Frederick William II possessed were these. He had a well furnished exchequer, but which he soon emptied: for, being unable to save, or to spend judiciously, he derived no real advantages from the fruits of his uncle's economy, and even while impoverishing himself, gave occasion to his being accused of avarice. He had, besides, an army which he wished to improve, but which he enervated, and the esteem of which he did not gain, whilst he lost its affection. He had allies also, who found him neither consistent, nor sure, nor with any settled plan of politics; for, with the exception of the interests, not of Holland, but of the Stadtholdership, to which he was bound by his strong attachment to his sister, who had married the Stadtholder, he remained irresolute between his friends and natural enemies,—that is to say, between England and France, Russia and Austria.

The aids which circumstances offered to the new King were the ministers and generals formed by his predecessor, and the events that had formed the latter himself, as well as his destiny and his kingdom, both extraordinary and unexampled. Among others, the King had two near kinsmen, powerful by their services, their talents, their renown, and their military popularity and who, under a strong-minded monarch, would nece-

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monarch the depositaries, of the sovereign power. These were Prince Henry * and the Duke of Brunswick †. The former, under the late King, had been only his first subject, his most brilliant soldier, honoured abroad, but kept in check at home. Prince Henry thought he had a right, and was impatient to undertake the guardianship of the new Monarch. The Duke of Brunswick, who had also been employed, kept in check, but caressed and governed by Frederick II, and whose ambition was more skilful and more circumspect than that of his rival, was not less eager to assume the same office, though he concealed it with more art.

From the very commencement of his correspondence, Mirabeau constantly mentions these two distinguished individuals. He draws a picture of Prince Henry more and more unfavourable, describing his hauteur and submission as equally out of place, his precipitancy and his awkwardness, his prompt discouragement, and his thoughtless return to confidence. He also describes the Duke of Brunswick, who, evincing as much discretion, secrecy, and perseverance as his competitor displayed haste, bustle, and fickleness, pursued a very

* Frederick Henry Louis of Prussia, second brother of Frederick II, born January 18th 1726, and died August 3rd 1802.

† Charles William Ferdinand Duke of Brunswick Luneburg, born October 9th 1739, and died October 10th 1806, from the effects of a wound received at the battle of Auwerstadt.

different road to reach the same object, which however he did not attain.

We shall attempt, in another place, to convey in a few words an idea of the serious and useful part of this correspondence, leaving out all personal details concerning the ministers who were contending with each other for the direction of a weak King, all particulars relating to secondary intrigues, and more especially a great number of frivolous remarks and scandalous anecdotes, which give to political despatches the tone and degradation of the reports of an ignoble *espionnage*.

Mirabeau in closing his correspondence proclaims by anticipation, in favour of Holland, to which recollections of hospitality exercised towards himself had attached him, the great principles of political reform he was about to develop in his own country, whither he was now anxious to return. Often in his letters, too often perhaps, he demands an acknowledged mission, an office in which he might render himself as useful as he feels himself capable of becoming. At the close of 1786, he determined to quit Berlin.

“What could I do here henceforward? Nothing useful; and a great public utility very direct, and very immediate, could alone make me overlook the extreme impropriety of the amphibious station conferred upon me here, if it lasted any longer. Once more, what I

can do, what I deserve, what I am worth, must now be determined upon between the King and his ministers. If I deserve and can do nothing, I cost too much; if I deserve and can do something; if nine months—for they will have elapsed before my return—if nine months in a very painful subaltern situation, in which I have encountered thousands of obstacles and no assistance whatever, have enabled me to show any knowledge of men, any information, any sagacity, without including the valuable matters I shall bring home in my portfolio,—I owe it to myself to demand and obtain an avowed appointment, or to return to my calling of citizen of the world, which will be less fatiguing for my mind and body and less unfruitful for my fame. I declare then positively, or rather I repeat, that I can no longer remain here, and I demand a formal authorisation for my return, whether the government have any further views upon me, or whether they will restore me to myself. Assuredly I shall never feel reluctance to undertake any useful occupation*.”

* Vol. ii. p. 348. If we are to believe Mirabeau, he received and even in a very pressing manner, the order to return which he had demanded.

“I have just received, my dear Major, an order to set out for Paris, and travel day and night. It is therefore impossible I can pass through B. (Brunswick) and embrace you. But this is only deferred; for besides its being a vent for my heart, I leave arms and baggage, friend, child and servants at Berlin.”—*Letters to Mauvillon*, p. 178, dated January 20th 1787, the very day on which Mirabeau set out.

Mirabeau, as we must observe, was urged by another motive, in which, far from concealing it, he took a pride.

“My heart has not grown old, and if my enthusiasm is damped it is not extinguished. I have fully experienced this to-day. I consider one of the best days of my life that on which I have received from you an account of the convocation of the Notables, which no doubt will not long precede that of the National Assembly. In this, I see a new order of things which may regenerate the monarchy. I should deem myself a thousand times honoured in being even the junior secretary of this assembly, of which I had the happiness of giving the first idea*.”

Such is the conclusion of this correspondence, which has led Mirabeau's enemies to accuse him of inconsistency, and to stain with the imputation of venality

* Vol. ii. p. 350. There is every reason to believe that Mirabeau had given advice on this subject; at least he says that he did, not only in the almost official letter we have just quoted, but in two other letters written to a friend who possessed his whole confidence.

“The advice which you call sublime, comes from me. I gave the first idea, the plan,” &c.—*Letters to Mauvillon*, p. 183.

“With reference to the assembly of Notables whatever rights I may appear to have, from the execution of an idea purely mine, and of which I traced the whole plan, I cannot think that our government has reached that degree of liberality which may make it desire that I should be one in an Assembly of Notables,—still less that I should occupy the place assigned to me by the public voice, that of Secretary.”—*Letters to Mauvillon*, p. 179.

the very principle of his mission, by attaching dishonour to its clandestinity, contesting the usefulness of Mirabeau's labours, and exaggerating the pecuniary emoluments he derived from it — "emoluments," they still exclaim, "the more lucrative in proportion as they were more degrading."

Our sole reply to this charge is the transcription of a correlative passage in a letter which he wrote to his father a year subsequently, and from which letter we have already given extracts *.

"I had set out for Berlin, in order not to remain in the breach. An account of the Bank of St. Charles appeared, which proved very injurious to me; the iniquitous and insane decree of October 2nd 1785, followed. Calonne knew that I was going to reply, and publish, and that I should crush the stock-jobbers and their chief. He thought it better to employ me. Frederick II was dying; some of my letters to my friends had led to the belief that I knew the country tolerably well. Our diplomacy there was not very active. According to his own account, and that of my friends, who had alarmed him, Calonne engaged M. de Vergennes to allow me to be entrusted with a secret mission, at the expense of the finance department. I was accordingly sent for to Paris, and was asked for some preliminary notions on Prussia. These I gave as

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his father, dated October 4th 1788.

free man, not as a courtier. Instructions and ciphers were given to me, and I once more set out for Berlin, having no further check with regard to money matters than to count *as from clerk to master*. When asked what salary I would have, I replied in these words :— ‘ I shall spend only for you ; therefore you shall pay what I lay out. With regard to future arrangements, as you brought me into office, it is for me to conduct myself well enough for you not to be tempted to turn me out again.’ To tell you the truth, I did not think them such fools, nor so alarmed at any description of talents and reputation, as they are in reality. Be this as it may, what I have just stated is the only ground people have ever had for saying that M. de Calonne paid me. The King, in fact, paid me, and in the following manner : I spent for him forty-two thousand livres in eight months and a half, including several secret services, the expense of different journeys, two secretaries, the luxury of clothing necessary at the Northern Courts, horses of all kinds, which are indispensable at Berlin, excursions into the interior of Germany, and the purchase of materials for the work on the Prussian Monarchy, which were the primitive elements of a paper for the ministers. Of these forty-two thousand livres, the King still owes me twelve thousand, which I shall probably never receive. If you add, that I have never foretold an event that did not occur, and that not a single event happened in Prussia that I did not fore-

tel ; if you further add fifty-four despatches in cipher, the shortest of which filled sixteen pages, and some fifty pages, I doubt that you will think I have cost more than I was worth."

We shall now only add a few particulars concerning Mirabeau's domestic life at Berlin ; and in favour of their novelty, we trust the reader will excuse their simplicity, and the ingenuousness with which they are written.

" He was prodigiously occupied at Berlin ; and it is inconceivable the use he made of his time. He often did not go to bed till an hour after midnight. He rose at five in the morning, in the middle of winter, and in this cold climate ; and, without any thing on but a simple quilted dressing-gown, without stockings or waistcoat, he worked away without even calling up his servant to light him some fire. Besides his correspondence in cipher, which occupied him a great deal, he worked assiduously at his "Prussian Monarchy," which was published in 1788. In the evening, when he did not go out into company, he would amuse himself like a great boy, with Noldé and his secretary ; it was who should play the other the most tricks. Mirabeau was spared the most, not from respect to the master of the house, but because he being the strongest, the others were afraid of his blows. He had a valet de chambre named Boyer, a good creature, though somewhat of a scamp. This man invented a species of *ombres Chi-*

noises, and got up some plays. The child and I did not always do them the honour to be present at these representations. When we did, I gave notice in the morning ; the scenes, which were either in German or in French *, were then arranged accordingly, and all that was too free was struck out. Boyer was much vexed at this, and complained that all the wit of the piece was taken away ; but when Mirabeau had said, ‘Take care of your ears, if Madame is not satisfied ;’ it was necessary to obey †.”

Having thus given an idea of Mirabeau’s political correspondence, before we follow him to Paris, we must notice another work which he wrote at Berlin ; not the “Prussian Monarchy,” which has its place elsewhere, but his letter to William Frederick II ‡, the spontaneous work of a mind constantly occupied with noble ideas, useful reforms, and philanthropic projects.

The title of this letter indicates that it was delivered on the very day of the new King’s accession to the throne, eight months before its publication. . It was not the usual fiction in similar cases ; a proof of which is

* Mirabeau wished that “the child,” then four years old, should speak both languages. “I have a good German nurse for the child, who knows as much German as French, an advantage I am anxious he should not lose.”—*Letters to Mauvillon*, p. 231.

† Unpublished Memoirs of Madame de Nehra.

‡ Letter addressed to Frederick William II, reigning King of Prussia, on the very day of his accession to the throne. By the Count of Mirabeau.”—Berlin, 1787. 84 pages, 8vo.

to be found in the following reply from Frederick William II :—

“ Monsieur le Comte de Mirabeau,

“ Your letter of the 17th instant *, with the paper enclosed in it, has been delivered to me. I am much obliged to you for sending me the latter, and for the kind things you have been good enough to say to me on this occasion. Be assured, that every thing coming from you will give me pleasure. Whereupon I pray to God, &c. †.”

Never was counsel more zealous and more neglected, wiser and more useless than that contained in this eloquent letter.

“ You have reached the throne at a fortunate period. The age is becoming daily more enlightened. It has laboured for your benefit, in collecting sound notions for you. It extends its influence over your nation which so many circumstances have kept behind others. Every thing is now tested by a severe logic. The men who see only a fellow-creature under the royal mantle, and require that he should possess some virtue, are more numerous than ever. Their suffrages cannot be dispensed with. In their opinion, one kind of glory alone remains—every other is exhausted. Mili-

* The very day of Frederick's death.

† Unpublished letter from Frederick William II to Mirabeau, dated August 20th 1786.

tary success, political talents, wonders in art, improvements in science, have all appeared in turn, and their light has blazed forth from one extremity of Europe to the other. That enlightened benevolence, which gives form and life to empires, has not yet appeared, pure and unmixed, upon a throne. To you it belongs to place it there; this sublime glory is reserved for you. Your predecessor gained battles enough, perhaps too many; he has too much fatigued Fame's hundred tongues, and exhausted military glory, for several reigns, nay, for several centuries. * * * * *

With much greater facility, you may create a glory more pure and not less brilliant, which shall be wholly your own. Frederick conquered the admiration of mankind, but he never won their love. * * * * *
This love you may entirely possess *.

* * * * *

“Do not, ah! do not neglect the treasure which Providence has spread in your path. Deserve the blessings of the poor, the love of your people, the respect of Europe, and the good wishes of wise men. Be just, be good, and you will be great and happy †!

“You would obtain, dread Sir, the title of Great: but you would receive it from the mouth of history, and from the suffrage of ages to come. You would despise it from the mouths of your courtiers. If you

* Pages 10, 11, 12.

† Page 15.

do that which the son of your slave could do, ten times a day, better than yourself, they will tell you that you have performed an extraordinary action! If you suffer your passions to mislead you, they will say that you are right! If you are as lavish of the blood of your subjects as of the waters of your rivers, again will they tell you that you are right! If you barter for gold, the air that preserves life, they will say that you are right! If you revenge yourself—you who are so powerful!—they will continue to tell you that you are right! . . . They said the same thing when Alexander, in a drunken fit, plunged his dagger into the bosom of his friend! They said the same thing, when Nero murdered his mother*.”

Mirabeau advises the King to acquire, from the very outset of his reign, laborious habits which shall serve as an example to all those about him.

“ If you indefatigably perform your duties, without ever putting off till the following day, the burthen of the present day—if by great and fruitful principles you can simplify these duties, and reduce them within the capacity of a single man—if you give your subjects all the freedom they can bear—if you can protect every kind of property, and facilitate useful labour—if you terrify petty oppressors who, in your name, would prevent men from doing, for their own advantage, that which injures not their fellows;—a unanimous shout will bless your authority, and render it more sacred, and

* Page 15.

more powerful. Every thing will then be easy for you, because the will and the strength of all will be united to your own strength and your own will, and your labour will become every day less severe. Nature has made labour necessary to man. It gives him also this precious advantage, that change of labour is to him not only a relaxation but a source of pleasure. Who, more easily than a King can live in strict accordance with this order of nature? A philosopher had said that 'no man feels such lassitude of spirit as a King?' he should have said, 'a slothful King.' How could lassitude of mind fall upon a sovereign who did his duty? Could he ever keep up his vigour of intellect, and preserve his health so well as by shielding himself, under the pursuit of labour, from the disgust which every man of sense must feel among those idle talkers, those inventors of fulsome praises, who study their Prince for no other purpose than to corrupt, blind, and rob him? Their sole art is to render him indifferent and feeble, or else impatient, rude and idle. * * * * Your subjects will enjoy your virtues, which alone can preserve and improve their patrimony. Your courtiers will cultivate your defects, by which alone they can support their influence and their expectations *."

Mirabeau, faithful to a principle to which he constantly recurs, recommends the King not to extend the direct action of the royal power to matters which

do not require it. "It is worthy of you not to govern too much *."

Among other necessary improvements, he distinguishes those brought about by time and experience, from those which ought to be effected immediately. He recommends the immediate "abolition of military slavery: that is to say, the obligation imposed upon every Prussian to serve as a soldier, from the age of eighteen years to sixty and more—that dreadful law arising from the necessities of an iron age, and a semi-barbarous country—that law dishonouring a nation without which your ancestors would have been nothing but slaves, more or less decorated with empty honours. This law does not produce you a single soldier more than you would obtain by a wiser system, which may enable you to recruit the Prussian army in a manner that shall elevate men's hearts, add to the public spirit, and possess the forms of freedom, instead of those of brutishness and slavery †. Throughout Europe, and more especially in your Majesty's dominions, one of the most useful instincts upon which patriotism could be founded, is stupidly lost. Men are forced to go to the battle-

* Page 20. O ministers, O European Princes!—your moderation is and will be the only pledge of your impunity. Use your power discreetly if you would preserve it. There is no servitude that does not leave a door open to freedom."—*Lettres de Cachet*, vol. i. p. 144.

† P. 24.

field, like cattle to the slaughter-house ; whilst nothing is easier than to make the public service an object of emulation and glory *."

Mirabeau then presents and proposes the great political measure of which, shortly after, he was the principal promoter in his own country ; that is to say, the establishment of a national guard †,—that army, alone

* P. 25.

† P. 27. We shall show elsewhere that he was the first who demanded for France this institution, the results of which the vast extent of his mind had enabled him to calculate. It may even be asserted that he instituted the national guard, even before the Constituent Assembly did so ; for it was by such an institution that, two years subsequently to the date of the writing of which we are now giving a review, he saved Marseilles from being plundered by brigands, and from the horrors of civil war. We shall not anticipate this event, the most glorious of Mirabeau's life ; but we cannot refrain from proving here, by his own evidence, the correctness of our assertion. We take the following quotation from his speech on the proceedings of the Provost's Court at Marseilles, made in the National Assembly, January 12th 1790. In this speech Mirabeau relates the facts, without alluding to the personal share he took in them.

" Marseilles, as a frontier city, and a sea-port, always contains a number of foreigners, unknown individuals, and sailors belonging to different nations—persons without fortune, and ready to undertake anything. These men assembled on the day following the popular excitement I have just mentioned [the riots of the 21st of March]. They were heard to threaten that they would plunder the warehouses of the merchants. A body of young men immediately united, and offered their services to repulse this mob. Their offers were accepted ; the brigands were surrounded and dispersed, and the formation of these young men into a civic guard was their reward. It was not enough to have preserved the city from devastation ; it was necessary to prevent a recurrence of the danger, and Marseilles,

able to avert the danger with which standing armies have not ceased to threaten the freedom of nations, ever since the days of Charles VII—that army of the law, of the city, of the people, of the country—that army to which France owes its conquests, and what is still more difficult, the preservation of its liberties, which henceforth cannot perish but with this admirable institution.

“Let your peasants,” Mirabeau continues, “form in their respective parishes, national companies, who shall exercise on Sundays. Let the national companies elect their own grenadiers; let these elections be made by a plurality of suffrages, and all arbitrary preferences will then be exploded, and every choice will become a distinction.”

He next inveighs against one of the harshest laws in Prussia.

“Allow to leave the country every one who is not detained in a legal manner by private obligations. Confer this freedom by a formal edict. This is one of those laws of eternal equity claimed by the force of things, which will do you infinite honour, and not cost you a single privation. Your subjects would not go and seek for a better condition than it is in your power to afford them; and even if it could be better

worthy of setting a great example, had the honour of anticipating the national militia.” Vol. iii., p. 103, *of the original edition of “Complete Collection of the Works of M. Mirabeau the Elder, at the National Assembly,” by Ellermé Méjan. Paris, Le Jay 1791. 5 Vols. 8vo.*

Elsewhere, your prohibitions against leaving the country would prove no real impediment to them. The most tyrannical laws concerning emigration have never produced any other effect than that of exciting the people to emigrate, against the feeling given them by nature, the most imperious perhaps of all : that of attachment to the country of their birth. The Laplander cherishes the rugged climate in which he first drew breath. How then can the native of a province enlightened by a more genial sky, think of quitting the land of his nativity, if a tyrannical government did not render useless or hateful to him the choice gifts of nature? A law of freedom, far from dispersing men, will retain them in what they will term their *good country*, which they will prefer to the most fertile lands. Man endures every thing from Providence, but nothing unjust from his fellow-man ; and if he submits to the latter, it is only with a rebellious heart. Man is not attached to the earth by roots ; therefore he belongs not to the soil. Neither is man a meadow, a field, or cattle ; therefore he cannot be a property. Man has an internal sense of these simple truths, and no one can persuade him that his chiefs have a right to chain him to the glebe ; in vain would all the powers of the earth unite to inculcate this infamous doctrine. The time no longer is, when the lords of the earth could speak the name of God—if such a period ever existed. language of reason and justice is the only one that

now-a-days obtain permanent success ; and sovereigns cannot be too strongly persuaded, if they have not resolved soon to reign over deserts, that the example of British America commands all governments to be just and prudent * . ”

Led forward, by the force of his intellect, to anticipate the progress of time, Mirabeau censures those antiquated and barbarous institutions, the abolition of which was not obtained by public reason till long afterwards. He more especially denounces to the new King, the right of seizing the property of deceased foreigners.

“ What do you obtain by these remains of feudality ? Before you extirpate them, do not wait for a system of reciprocity which never produces any other effect than to keep nations longer in a state of unreasonableness and war. That which is good to be done for the prosperity of a nation, has no need of reciprocity. If a state loses by the fact that, in another state, men and property are tyrannised over, it is for its own government to begin by putting a stop to such deplorable things at home. Must not some one begin ? It is noble and worthy of a King, to set the example in whatever is just and honest.”

Mirabeau further demands for the burghers, the freedom of “ purchasing the estates of nobles. What is

* P. 50.

the result of this absurd prohibition?—a depreciation of the value of landed property: that is to say, a depreciation of the first wealth of a state; then a decline of agriculture, already discouraged by other causes. All this is an aggravation of the terrible prejudice that mutilates the burghers, and stupifies the nobles by converting their honorary rights into a source of exclusive consideration, which renders it unnecessary for them to obtain any other. It raises a positive necessity, for those who are not noble, either to betake themselves, or else to send their wealth, to a foreign land; as, when they have acquired some capital, they cannot employ it either in trade, which is crippled by monopoly, or in agriculture, because they are not allowed to become proprietors of the soil. Wherever burghers can purchase land, trade is honoured and the country in a high state of cultivation; it offers an aspect of abundance and prosperity; commercial industry awakens every other. The earth also demands those ingenious processes which excite vegetation and extend it over the most ungrateful soils. These processes were never invented in countries of nobles: we owe them to constitutions where illustrious lineage disappears before the merit and talents which it does not possess*.”

He next raises his voice against the abuse of the prerogatives claimed by the nobles, and against the political helotism of all who are not noble.

* P. 35.

“Abolish those foolish prerogatives which fill the great offices of the state with men of mediocrity, to say no worse, and destroy the affection of the great body of your subjects for a country in which they encounter nothing but obstacles and humiliation. Have a care of that universal aristocracy, the scourge of monarchical still more than of republican government, and which from one extremity of the globe to the other, oppresses the human species. The interests of the most absolute Monarch, lie wholly in these popular maxims. It is not the sovereigns whom the people dread and repulse, but their ministers, their courtiers, their nobles—their aristocracy, in short. ‘If the King knew it!’ they exclaim. They always invoke the royal authority, to which they are ever ready to lend their assistance against the aristocracy. Whence comes the Monarch’s strength, but from the people? Whence comes his personal safety, but from the people? Whence come his wealth and splendour, but from the people? Whence come the blessings which alone can make him feel happiness, but from the people? And who are his enemies, but the great, the aristocrats, who would have the King with them only the *primus inter pares*, and who, wherever they could do so, have left him no other pre-eminence than his rank, keeping that of power for themselves? By what strange mistake do Kings degrade their friends, and deliver themselves over to their foes? It is in the interest of the people, it is also

their wish, that their sovereign should not be deceived ; but the great have a contrary interest and wish. The people are easily satisfied ; they give and do not ask. Prevent the titled idler from weighing upon them ; open to them the career pointed out to man by the Supreme Being when he created him, and they will not complain*.”

In another part Mirabeau attacks the prejudice “ that places so great a distance between military and civil offices. Such a prejudice under a weak King, whom your Majesty’s house, like any other, might produce, would expose the nation, and even the throne, to all the convulsions of pretorian anarchy†. In a state like yours, it is possible that the military ought to take precedence ; but they must not enjoy exclusive consideration, otherwise you will have an army, but no kingdom‡.”

He urges that the judges should be appointed for life §, and justice rendered free of expense. “ If the

* P. 37.

† P. 40.

‡ P. 41.

§ Mirabeau had already pleaded this great principle, and indirectly proposed the introduction of trial by jury.

“ The judges ought not, if we would have them honest, to be removable so long as they do not prevaricate in the execution of their duties. Their independence in the administration of justice is as necessary a pledge, as their integrity, of the liberties, lives, and properties of their fellow-citizens. These magistrates should be the organs of the law and not its interpreters, otherwise they would be legislators. Their duties should be reduced to determine whether

judges have only a salary to receive, justice will be rendered promptly and equitably. They should be paid from the public revenue and not by fees *."

He presses the King to establish workshops for the public works.

" Be also the first Sovereign in whose dominions every man willing to work shall find employment. Every thing that breathes must obtain its nourishment by labour. This is the first law of nature, anterior to all human convention; it is the connecting bond of all society †; for every man who finds nothing but a refusal to his offer to work in exchange for his subsistence, becomes the natural and lawful enemy of other men, and has a right of private war against society ‡. In the country, as in cities, let workshops be everywhere opened at your Majesty's cost; let all men, of what nation soever, find their maintenance in the price of their labour; let your subjects there learn the value of time and activity §.

such or such an act is contrary to the written law, which inflicts upon him who violates it such a penalty or such a chastisement. The law should therefore be precise and positive, in order that the judges may have to decide only upon a question of fact. Were it otherwise, no individual would know precisely his duties or his rights, and the citizens would be in a state of real servitude with reference to the magistrates."—*Lettres de Cachet*, p. 33.

* Letter to Frederick William II, p. 42.

† P. 48.

‡ P. 44.

§ P. 44.

He next recommends public instruction, and the liberty of the press.

“ Instruction, you are aware, is one of the most important of a Sovereign’s duties, and likewise one of his richest treasures *. Entire liberty of the press ought to be one of your first acts ; not only because any restraint upon this liberty is a hindrance to the enjoyment of natural rights, but because every obstacle to the advancement of knowledge is an evil, a great evil, especially for you who are debarred thereby from obtaining, through the medium of printing, a knowledge of the truth, and of public opinion, that prime minister of good Kings Let information be circulated through your dominions. Read, and let others read. If light were rising on all sides towards the throne, would you invoke darkness ? Oh, no !—for it would be in vain. You would lose too much, without

* P. 46. At the same period, he wrote elsewhere—

“ Let us believe that, except accidents, which are the inevitable consequences of the general order, there is evil upon earth, only because there are errors ; that when knowledge, and morality with it, have penetrated through the different classes of society, weak minds will acquire courage from prudence, and the ambitious will acquire morals from interest ; power will acquire moderation from foresight, the rich will acquire benevolence from calculation ; and thus instruction will infallibly diminish, sooner or later, the evils of the human species, so as to render its condition the mildest possible for perishable creatures to attain.”—*Preface to the Work on Moses Mendelssohn*, p. 65.

† P. 48.

even obtaining the fatal success of extinguishing it. You will read, you will begin a noble association with books. They have destroyed cruel and disgraceful prejudices, they have smoothed the road before you, they have served you even before you were born. You will not be ungrateful towards the accumulated works of beneficent genius. You will read, and you will protect those who write ; for without them what would become of the human species, and what would it be ? They will instruct, they will assist, they will talk to you without seeing you. Without approaching your throne, they will introduce there the august truth. This truth will enter your palace alone, without escort, and without affected dignity ; it will bear neither title, nor ribands, but will be invisible and disinterested. You will read, but you will be desirous that your subjects should also read. You will not think you have done all by recruiting your academies from foreign countries : you will found schools, you will multiply them, especially in country places, and you will endow them. You would not reign in darkness ; and you will say, ‘ Let there be light ! ’ The light will burst forth at your voice, and its halo, playing round your brow, will form a more glorious ornament than all the laurels won by conquerors.”

Mirabeau next inveighs against lotteries, which he terms a devouring plague *, and he sums up in a

* P. 50.

few words the strongest objections to them that can be urged.

“ That which pretended statesmen have dared to write and to print, will be urged to you ; ‘ that lotteries may be considered a free and voluntary tax ’ A tax ! What tax must that be which founds its greatest receipts upon madness or despair ? What tax must that be which the wealthy are not bound to pay, and which the wisest men and the best citizens will never pay ? A free tax ! This is a singular kind of freedom ! Every day, and every minute of the day, the people are told that it depends only upon themselves to become rich at a small expense ! A million is proposed at the cost of a single livre to the poor wretch who cannot calculate and is in want of the necessaries of life ; and the sacrifice which he makes to this mad hope, of the only money he possesses in the world—of that money which would appease the cries of his hungry children—is called a free and voluntary gift !—It is a tax he pays to his Sovereign !

“ You will be further told that this horrible invention which poisons every thing, even hope, that last of human possessions, is no doubt an evil ; but that it is much better you should yourself reap the harvest of your own lottery, than allow it to be reaped by foreign lotteries. Reject, I entreat you, this corrupt arithmetic, this detestable sophistry. Surely, there are

means of preventing the effect of foreign lotteries. Their secret collectors need not be feared; for, if the penalty is severe, they will not make much progress; and it is in such a case alone that a reward for informing against those who violate the law, is productive of no evil, because it becomes the denunciation of a circulating plague. The natural penalty to be inflicted on those who favour speculations in foreign lotteries, is infamy, and exclusion from municipal offices, from trading corporations, and from the public exchange. Such a penalty is severe, and would, no doubt, prove effective. But if extreme remedies were necessary to put a stop to this crime, capital punishment, that infliction so repugnant to my soul, and the thought of which freezes my very heart's blood,—that infliction applied to so many crimes, and which perhaps no crime justifies, would be more excusable by the horrible list of disorders and misfortunes arising from lotteries, than by even the most exaggerated consequences of domestic theft *.

* P. 50. This advice upon lotteries, of no more avail than that upon any of the other subjects in this letter, formed the topic of a conversation between the King and Mirabeau, who states it in the "Correspondence from Berlin," Vol. II. p. 337.

"The King said to me yesterday: 'who is one M. de Lazaux?'

" 'Dusaux, perhaps, your Majesty means?'

" 'Yes, Dusaux.'

" 'He is a member of our Academy of Inscriptions.'

" 'He sent me yesterday a very thick volume upon gaming.'

Mirabeau defends before an absolute King the cause which, in his early youth, he had pleaded in prison,

“ ‘ Alas ! Sir, it behoves you Monarchs, masters of the earth, to destroy gaming. Our books will not produce any great effect.’ ”

“ ‘ The fact is, he embarrasses me ; he pays me a compliment which I do not at all deserve—he congratulates me upon having put an end to the *lotto*. I wish it were true, but I have done no such thing.’ ”

“ ‘ Ah ! Sir, your Majesty’s wishing it is a great point gained.’ ”

“ ‘ On this subject I owe you an apology, for it is one of the good counsels in a certain manuscript. . . . But you must excuse me still a little while : funds are assigned upon the produce of this nasty *lotto*, to the military school, for instance.’ ”

“ ‘ Fortunately, Sir, a momentary deficit of fifty thousand crowns is not very embarrassing to the richest, in coined money, of all earthly Monarchs.’ ”

“ ‘ Yes, but conventions ?’ ”

“ ‘ None, Sir, are violated when payment is made, and indemnity given as between party and party. And then despotism has been so much used to produce evil, that it would be no great matter if it were for once applied to the promotion of good.’ ”

“ ‘ So, then, you are becoming somewhat reconciled to despotism ?’ ”

“ ‘ I must needs become so, Sir, in a country where a single head has four hundred thousand arms.’ ”

“ At this he laughed rather sillily. He was then reminded of going to the theatre, and our conversation ended. You see that even in this man of little mind there exists a desire to be praised !’ ”

Five months previously, in fact, a report had been spread of the suppression of the lottery. Proof of this exists in a letter from Mirabeau, to be found in page 25 of the collection written to Mavillon. It contains the following passage :

“ It is stated, as positive, that a decree is signed for the suppression of the *lotto* at Berlin. May all the blessings of Heaven be poured upon a reign which begins thus !’ ”

and on which, while in the Donjon of Vincennes, he wrote an eloquent and special dissertation.

“ Declare immediately,” he says to the King, “ and stamp your declaration with the most imposing insignia of the Sovereign Authority, that unlimited toleration shall, in your dominions, be extended to all religions. You have a very natural and not less valuable opportunity of making this declaration. Let it form part of an edict granting civil liberty to the Jews. This act of beneficence, which, from the very beginning of your reign, will make you surpass in religious toleration even your illustrious predecessor, who was the most tolerant sovereign that has yet existed, will not remain unrewarded: besides the great increase of population and of capital that it will draw to your country, at the expense of other countries, the Jews, from the second generation, will become good and useful citizens. For this you need only encourage them to pursue the mechanical arts and agriculture,—both of which are now forbidden them—free them from the special taxes now weighing upon them, and place them, like all your other subjects, within the jurisdiction of the civil tribunals, depriving their Rabbis of all secular authority. Do not, I entreat you, delay your declaration of the most universal religious toleration; for those who will benefit by it, are at present afraid of losing, in this kind of freedom, more than they will gain. They have taken alarm at what they term your preju-

dices and your doctrines. Disavow the statements of those who have announced you as intolerant *. Show them that your respect for religious opinions is derived from that of the Almighty Creator, and that you are far from laying down any particular form of worshipping him. Show that whatever your philosophical or religious opinions may be, you never pretended to the absurd and tyrannical right of forcing other mortals to adopt them †."

After thus setting forth the improvements which the King might effectuate immediately, Mirabeau enters into an examination of the reforms equally useful, but less urgent, less easy of execution, and which he is of opinion should be brought about gradually. He blames the whole system of political economy adopted by the late King—"a system so totally wrong—indirect taxes, absurd prohibitions, regulations of all kinds, exclusive privileges, and monopolies without number ‡."

He inveighs against the King's fixing the rate of charges at inns, the wages of footmen, and the price of all the necessaries of life,—against the prohibition of the produce of neighbouring countries, not raised in Prussia; against the difference in the amount of the direct taxes paid by the clergy, the nobles and the

* Frederick William was at once a partisan and a dupe of that visionary and intolerant sect called the Illuminati.

† Page 52.

‡ Page 55.

people ; against the neglect of immense tracts of land that remain untilled, and which judicious divisions and cessions at a quit-rent would soon render productive ; against the concentration of an enormous mass of specie in the royal exchequer, a useless hoard withdrawn from the circulation, and the want of which leaves in a state of inaction and moral languor that industry into which the circulation of capital would instil life and vigour. He proposes that the King should diminish “ the indirect taxes, the custom and excise duties, the produce of which would increase in an inverse ratio to the amount of such duties, and to the severity exercised in collecting them * . Increase the land tax, from which no landed property should be exempt † ; facilitate trade by permits, abolish monopolies, give freedom to industry, arts, trades, and commerce, which cannot live except under the shadow of liberty, and asks of Kings merely that they will do it no injury ‡ . Your Majesty will give freedom to all, and privileges to none. Those who demand the latter, are almost always either ignorant or dishonest, and there can be no more certain means of destroying industry than by granting privileges § .”

Mirabeau concludes with this eloquent apostrophe.

“ I trust, dread Sir, that my candour will not displease you. . . . If it moves you, O Frederick !

* Page 71.

† Page 72.

‡ Page 75.

§ Page 76.

meditate upon these sincere and free, but respectful, lines, and say :

“ ‘ This is what will never be admitted to me as true, and is the very reverse of what I shall be told every day. The boldest offer to Kings nothing but veiled truths, whilst here I see truth quite naked . . . This is far preferable to that venal incense with which I am suffocated by versifiers, and panegyrists of the Academy, who seized upon me in my cradle, and will scarcely leave me when I am in my coffin. I am a man before I am a King. Why should I be offended at being treated as a man ? Why should I be offended with a foreigner, who wants nothing of me, and will soon quit my court never more to see me, for speaking to me without disguise ? He points out to me that which his eyes, his experience, his studies, and his understanding have collected ; he gives me, without expectation of reward, those true and free counsels of which no condition of man is so much in want as Kings. He has no interest in deceiving me, and can have none but good intentions. . . . Let me examine attentively what he proposes ; for mere common sense, and the simple candour of a man who has no other pursuit than the cultivation of his reason and his intellect, may, perhaps, be as good as the old routine, and trickery, and forms, and diplomatic illusions, and the ridiculous dogmas of statesmen by profession *.”

It may, perhaps, strike the reader that, contrary to our usual practice, we have given some extent to our extracts from this work, long since published. Our reasons for doing so are, on the one hand, because this letter to the King of Prussia is much less known than others of Mirabeau's works very inferior to it ; and, on the other hand, because, like the work on Moses Mendelssohn, this letter is a statement of principles the rectitude of which time has proved, of anticipations which events have rendered prophecies, of counsels which have become political laws, and of theories which have become constitutions. Finally, it appeared to us only an act of justice to point out once more how the instinct of a mind and the inspirations of a genius, worthy of one another, successively led Mirabeau from speculation to practice, and from his obscure and spontaneous office of "citizen of the world*" to the dignity of chief of the most extensive, the most imposing, and the most fruitful of political revolutions.

We must here notice another writing, published several months subsequently, bearing the title of "Advice to a young Prince who feels the necessity of being educated over again †."

* Correspondence from Berlin, p. 349.

† 8vo, 1788, 88 pages. Peuchet, who often speaks of Mirabeau's writings, without having read them, confounds the "Advice to a young Prince," &c., with the Letter to Frederick William II. See vol. iii. p. 59. of Peuchet's work.

This work does not contain the elevated generalities of the preceding. It is a collection of observations on the kind of intellect necessary for Princes, on their influence over morals, on the conduct they ought to adopt towards women, on the care they ought to take to be accessible, and to acquire popularity; on the advantage to them of questioning much and well; on the sort of instruction necessary to them; on the historical studies which they ought to pursue, and so forth.

This work, which is far from methodical and complete, and the imperfect and unconnected composition of which will not well bear analysing, is written in a style often powerful, but harsh, unequal, and incorrect. It abounds in exceedingly entangled metaphysical reasonings, in singularity of expression, and in forced comparisons. It has neither nature, elegance, nor clearness. The reader will, therefore, be less surprised when we state a fact hitherto unknown to the public, namely, that this production, though published in Mirabeau's name, and probably without his knowledge, was not written by him. It consists of an extract which he had made from an unfinished work by his father, entitled "L'Apareil." This fact, the proof of which is before us*, and the want of interest in the work itself, have determined us not to notice it further.

* We have this extract in Mirabeau's handwriting consisting of fifty-two folio pages. Mirabeau had attached it to his father's manuscript, which is also in our possession.

In closing our narrative of Mirabeau's residence at Berlin, we must not forget a real service which he rendered to his country, by prevailing upon the French Government to give an appointment at Paris to the illustrious La Grange*, who had long resided in

* Joseph Louis La Grange, the celebrated author of "Analytical Mechanics," "Theory of Analytical Functions," and "Resolution of Numerical Equations." He was born in 1736, and died in 1813. Mirabeau speaks of him in the following terms:—

"I have few intimates here (at Berlin), and not one of true and profound friendship, except M. de la Grange, who is really a wonderful man—as good as he is great."—*Letters to Mauvillon*, p. 172.

"It seems to me that there is here, at this moment, an acquisition worthy of the King of France, and which M. de Calonne is worthy to propose to him. The illustrious La Grange, the greatest geometer that has appeared since Newton, who is, in every respect, of all the men I have seen, the one who has most surprised me;—La Grange, the wisest and perhaps the only real practical philosopher that ever lived, recommendable by his imperturbable wisdom, his morals, and his general conduct, and who, in fine, is held in the most affectionate respect by the small number of men he allows to approach him;—has resided, during the last twenty years, at Berlin, whither he was called in early youth by the late King to replace Euler, who had designated him as the only man able to walk in a line with himself. He is much dissatisfied, though he utters no complaint; but his dissatisfaction is irremediable, because it springs from contempt.

* * * *

• • Every thing invites him to withdraw from a country where nothing can atone for the crime of being a foreigner, and where he will never submit to be only tolerated.

"Under these circumstances, there is no doubt that he would willingly exchange the sun and money of Prussia for the sun and money

Prussia. Although this fact is well known, we trust that the statement is not out of place here. The following is the conclusion of his despatch upon the subject.

“ Is it beneath Louis XVI to withdraw from a miserable academy a great man who is there unappreciated, and unworthily connected, and thus destroy, by the most noble mode of warfare, the only literary body that has contended with his own? Is not this a more judicious kind of generosity than many others? France has, with such bad policy, afforded an asylum to so

of France, the only country in the world in which a due worship is rendered to the genius of arts and science, and durable reputations are built,—the only country in which La Grange, the grandson of a Frenchman, and who recollects with gratitude that we first made him known throughout Europe, can love to dwell, if he must renounce his habits. Prince Cardito de Leffredo, the Neapolitan minister at Copenhagen, has made him very tempting offers in the name of his sovereign. The Grand Duke, and the King of Sardinia, warmly press him to come to their dominions; but all these offers would be readily forgotten in favour of ours.

* * * * *

“ La Grange enjoys here an annual pension of 6000 livres. Cannot the King of France afford to give this sum to the first geometer in Europe of the present century?

* * * * *

“ * * I am much struck with this idea, because I think it a noble one, and because I am affectionately attached to him who is the object of it. I beg for a reply as soon as possible; for I confess that I have induced M. de la Grange to delay replying to the other proposals made to him, in order that he may wait for ours.”—*Correspondence from Berlin*, vol. ii. p. 173, and following.

many Princes who could not but put her to expense! —why, therefore, should she not obtain a great man who cannot but prove valuable to her? Having so long enriched others by her losses, why should she not enrich herself by the mistakes of others?”

BOOK V.

WE have stated that it was principally the meeting of the Notables that hastened Mirabeau's return to Paris. He felt (and this may easily be conceived) that his proper place was in the centre of the great events announced and begun by this convocation, the results of which, striking as they were to every apprehension, could not be more surely anticipated and measured than by his powerful mind.

The undignified and inglorious prodigality of the preceding reign, had laid the foundation of great financial vicissitudes. Louis XVI had brought with him to the throne the private virtues of a good and honest man, but not the qualities of a Sovereign. Though economical to excess, as regarded himself, he nevertheless suffered to exist, and even to increase around him, those dilapidations which at last ruined the resources of the state. Though a course of arduous study had given him considerable information,

he had no confidence in himself*. Full of love for his people, even his sense of their wretchedness, and his anxiety and endeavours to procure them partial relief, could not raise in him the resolution necessary to determine upon great reforms, nor the vigour necessary to execute them. A line of policy had been pursued, the consequences of which were calculated seriously to endanger even a healthful state of finances, and must therefore inevitably overthrow the already involved finances of France.

The war in favour of American independence, undertaken by the King against his own wish, but from deference to public opinion, had cost the country more than twelve hundred millions of livres, raised by loans in every possible form. The administration that had incurred this debt, took much credit to themselves for having provided means to meet every contingency without increasing the taxes—an unworthy excuse, as well as a rash falsehood, because such loans were nothing better than a disguised impost. Like spendthrifts who rejoice in finding means to dissipate money,

* Mirabeau respectfully reproached him with this fatal timidity.

“ We dare urge him, on this as on every other occasion, to see with his own eyes, judge by his own knowledge, resist his very estimable but too great diffidence of himself, and consider this truth an axiom—that energy of character always constitutes sufficient talents, especially to reign—and to reign as a great and good King.”
Page 208 of the Postscript to the Work entitled “ On the Caisse d’Escompte.”

who boast of their credit, and perhaps believe in it so long as they find dupers or dupes, these ministers plunged deeper and deeper into this fatal vortex. The interest on these loans now continually increased the annual expenditure ; and to prevent the latter from exceeding the revenue, either this must be increased, or else the expense diminished by bold and extensive measures of economy. But nothing was done : neither the revenue was increased nor the expenditure diminished, and a deficit was the necessary consequence. This deficit, which could never be covered except by new loans, increased from year to year by the accumulation of interest. Capital was sunk to pay arrears of interest ; the country was striding rapidly towards its ruin, and the final catastrophe was rendered more dreadful only by delay.

This alarming truth was too evident for the different ministers of Louis XVI not to have perceived it. To diminish the expenditure was indispensable, and ought to have been easy, by suppressing a considerable number of disbursements justified by no necessary and lawful motive. To increase the revenue was equally necessary, and might have been effected by abolishing absurd and unjust privileges which ought to have melted away before the advance of time, the progress of knowledge, the public conviction, the King's honesty, and the danger of the state. But these reforms, so easy in principle, seemed impossible in fact. On the

one hand, needless and abusive expenses were obstinately supported, in all classes, and more especially at court, by an intelligent and compact coalition of those who profited by them. On the other hand, the privileges were as strongly supported by the double resistance of the personal interest and the pride of the privileged orders. The latter, with some rare and generous exceptions, were less disposed to pay taxes, because they themselves collected taxes under the name of "Feudal Rights," which public opinion assigned to the exhausted exchequer, and begrudged to an aristocracy disinherited of its prestiges by time and an equivocal admixture of blood.

By strenuous resistance did the courtiers, the great lords, and the parliaments, oppose, then discourage, then drive from office, the best intentioned, the most virtuous, and the most able ministers whom the young King, in the sincerity of his patriotism, had chosen on his accession, in deference to the public feeling. Among these ministers were Malesherbes and Turgot. The same thing occurred to Necker, who had knowledge and virtue, and who, after employing all the resources of credit to raise funds for the war, was overthrown the moment that, by the combined actions of reforms and taxes, he endeavoured to establish an equilibrium betwixt the ordinary receipts and disbursements, and provide for the arrears and the liquidation of the public debt. This grave and honest minister, pedantic

and unskilful in handling men, had succeeded a witty, but thoughtless and frivolous courtier, confident and bold, and who sought to eradicate abuses by giving them greater scope. He had lent himself with complaisance to the most impudent public robberies, fancying that they would thereby cease. Under a different form, however, Necker continued the system of his predecessor,—that is to say, he met the current service by means of loans, but was anxious to fill up the deficit and gradually to pay off the public debt.

M. de Calonne, in his turn, ran close to the quicksand upon which his three predecessors had been wrecked. He perceived the obstacles, hitherto considered invincible, about to be opposed to his plans of economy by the court which lived by abuses, and his plans of taxation by the privileged who were supported by the parliaments, of which many were members—or rather the parliaments were almost wholly composed of privileged individuals.

It cannot be decided which of these bodies of opponents was the most formidable.

Under so feeble a King, the influence of the courtiers was no doubt irresistible ; and events have proved but too fully, that from having been unable to resist this influence, from not having preferred his own conviction to theirs, from not having listened to the counsels of his friends, to the voice of the past, to the lessons given by passing events, to the most infallible warnings,

the King successively lost his repose, his happiness, his crown, and his life.

The parliaments, on the other hand, became more and more embarrassing to the government. After having for a long time arrogated to themselves the guardianship of the King and the state; after having, on the impulse of the calculations and passions of the moment, made use of the people against the nobles and the clergy—or of one or other of these, or both, against the people—or all three against the King's ministers: after having been overthrown by the brutal, but powerful, arm of Chancellor Maupeou, these parliaments had been reinstated. This was almost the first act of a young King, whose fate it was to prepare his own ruin by measures which he thought he was conceding to the wishes of the nation, and for which he then received praises and blessings.

No sooner were the parliaments reinstated, than they resumed their former pride and their former pretensions, and the more so, perhaps, because, in the royal edict, which recalled them, they saw more of imprudence and of weakness than of sound policy *. The parliaments

* Mirabeau, in his unpublished "Letter written by a former Magistrate," &c. says—

"The people rejoice at the return of the parliaments, because they are the people—because they hoped that the misfortunes of the parliaments would have corrected them—because they did not foresee that the pride of these bodies of magistrates would be greatly increased by their unconditional restoration, which seemed to proclaim that

were filled with ardent and presumptuous young men, who from *esprit de corps*, the interests of their order, and ambition of popularity, became more and more hostile to the different administrations which rapidly succeeded each other. They formed the rallying centre of the political opposition, and became its most violent organs. By a most inexplicable inconsistency, on the one hand, they declared themselves, in the name of the people, incompetent to register taxes, the legal sanction to which they had for several centuries claimed the right of giving or withholding, and which soon afterwards they again registered *; on the other hand, whilst they loudly demanded the convocation of the States General, they required that the proceed-

the commonwealth could not do without them. The hope of the poor people was soon destroyed a second time."

He gives his opinion also in the writing which Soulavie has transformed into "Memoirs of the Duke d'Aguillon."

"The return of the parliaments in 1774, required years of meditation, reflection, and secret and preliminary negotiation. Three months, however, sufficed to place them in the same physical situation they enjoyed December 3rd 1770, with an increase of authority which cannot belong to parliaments, and which will at last destroy the King's authority."—page 184.

"On the recal of the parliaments, M. de Choiseul said, 'Maupeou upset the cart on the left side, but Hue [de Mirmeuil] has overturned it on the right side;' and M. de Choiseul was right."—Page 55.

* Witness the decree, dated September 20th 1787, for raising * twentieth, which the Parliament of Paris registered, in order to be recalled from Troyes, whither it had been exiled.

ings of the latter should be subjected to old rules *, which would have reduced the action of the Tiers-Etat to a mere form, and the proceedings of the Assembly to a vain deception.

With a daily increasing deficit, the resistance of the Court, and a refusal to register edicts of taxation, M. de Calonne had but the choice of two alternatives : a national bankruptcy, or the convocation of the States-General. The King's probity made him regard the former with horror, whilst his prejudices of birth, strengthened by the suggestions of his courtiers, made him dread the latter. M. de Calonne, the minister of provisional remedies, of palliatives, of delaying payments, of half measures—M. de Calonne, thoughtless, confident, romantic, fancied he was doing wonders when he hit upon a medium between the two extremes of necessity. He accordingly proposed to the King to constitute an Assembly of Notables, consisting of a selection of individuals made from the nobles, the hierarchy, and the magistrates, and of deputies sent by the town municipalities, and elected from among individuals distinguished by holding public charges,

* Those of the States of 1614. The truth is, that the Parliaments really wished that the States-General should not assemble; and Mirabeau tells us why.

“ The Parliament prefers surrounding its pretensions with clouds, to seeing them fixed by a national decision.”— *Reply to the Alarm of Good Citizens*, p. 26.

or offices under government, or by their wealth*. Such a combination was essentially wrong, and led to a complete failure in the object aimed at. For to obtain the only practicable remedy, that is to say, on the one hand, a diminution of expenditure by the suppression of sinecures and pecuniary favours, and on the other, an increase of revenue by the abolition of abusive exemptions, was it not an absurd inconsistency to apply to the very men who profited by these favours and exemptions; and who showed by the event, that they were little inclined to sacrifice abuses and privileges so flattering to their vanity, and so useful to their fortunes?

Nevertheless, whatever hope had been founded upon this expedient, the knell of the administration, and even the monarchy itself, had sounded.

Mirabeau had arrived at Paris on the 27th of January preceding. During his journey, he had meditated upon the subject of a paper, which he wished to lay before the Assembly of Notables, and in which he intended to discuss the most pressing question of the moment—that is to say, the necessity of repairing the finances of the kingdom. The moment was come,

* Among a hundred and fifty-six Notables, there were seven Princes of the blood, seven Archbishops, seven Bishops, eight Marshals of France, twelve Dukes, some of them peers, some not, thirty-four First Presidents, or Procureurs-generaux, eight Councillors of state, four Intendants of provinces, twenty titled nobles, twelve country deputies of condition, twenty municipal officers, &c.

when the most implacable enemy of stock-jobbing was to inflict upon it a last and decisive blow, before an Assembly, whose deliberations were about to enlighten and, probably, direct a Monarch, hitherto ill-seconded in his benevolent intentions. Mirabeau wrote and published, within a period of three weeks, his “ Denunciation of Stock-jobbing, to the King, and the Assembly of Notables *.”

This is one of Mirabeau’s most important works. As it is also one of his best, and has not been duly appreciated, we consider that it requires a more extended notice from us; and to make known the occasion on which it was written, as well as its object and the intention of its author, we think it right to transcribe a few pages from Mirabeau’s letters to Mauvillon, a work, not a copy of which is to be purchased in France, and which no one of our predecessors has ever quoted or even known. In these letters, Mirabeau, speaking to a friend, and not to the public, wrote by anticipation, and without intending it, the preface, the most suitable, in our opinion, to the “ Denunciation of Stock-jobbing.”

“ The date of my letter† will surprise you a little,

* 1787. February 26th, date of the Dedicatory Epistle to the King. 8vo, 143 pages, with the following epigraph :—

Pensais-tu qu’un instant ma vertu démentie
Mettrait dans la balance un homme et la patrie ?

VOLTAIRE.

† Liège, March 24th 1787.

my dear Major. I was unable, earlier, to give you an account of my new situation, however impatient I might have been to put you on your guard against absurd, calumnious, or mutilated traditions, and to make you the judge of my conduct. But I trusted that your friendship would induce you at least to suspend your judgment, and that you would be pleased with me for having trusted to this friendship.

“No sooner had I returned to Paris, than I perceived not only that the appointment*, which it had been very difficult not to have conferred upon me, under circumstances of which I had given the first idea, and which were brought about by my exertions, was bestowed upon another†, but that the aspect of affairs had become such, the disordered state of the finances so alarming, and discontent so general, that the government, deprived, as a climax to its embarrassment, by the approaching death of M. de Vergennes, of the only support that could still give it any consistency, was solely struggling for its personal safety, without attempting to organise and constitute the Nation, which it will never do; that consequently it required drawers up of manifestoes and not assistants—intriguers and satellites, not citizens aides-de-camp. As I am one of those who can least

* That of Secretary to the Assembly of Notables.

† To Dupont de Nemours.

evinced the germ of talent or intellect when my conviction is not determined, I soon said to myself that I was worth nothing for such work.

“ I therefore thought only of resuming the profession, I had just quitted; and hopeless of becoming, for the moment, the instrument of a greater, more proximate, and more direct good, I applied to be sent to Nimeguen in a capacity purely pacific and passive, to which I was called by the confidence of some good Dutch citizens, and the favourable impressions towards me entertained by the Princess herself*.

“ But this did not suit the minister of finance, who would have preferred leaving me at Berlin to seeing me return without being useful to him in what he was then doing; and more particularly, although my silence did not appear to him a favourable omen, even as regarded the public opinion, he would have preferred keeping me in the most complete inactivity, to allowing me to participate the least ostensibly, in operations all the merit of which the irritated nation would deprive him of, and leave him nothing but the disagreeable and laborious part. Thus I must either serve him, or not serve at all; and as the step he had taken of laying open the *state of the nation*, exposed him to the most serious attacks, and the strictest inquiry, I could

* The correspondence from Berlin mentions several times this project of sending Mirabeau to Nimeguen, and the wish that he should go thither expressed by the Princess of Orange, sister of Frederick William II.

hardly serve him except by supporting his strange accounts, which it was impossible to verify except by an examination that would last several months; by supporting a truly insensate administration in its very hazardous assertions and promises; and lastly and especially by proving, in a defence of its acts, that its only object in demanding of the nation an extraordinary effort, is to secure funds on a vast mortgage, by means of which it can go on,—‘according to its old system,’ say those who do not believe that a man improves at fifty-four years of age. Now all this suited me very ill, as I cannot assert much less prove what I do not think, nor defend what my conviction condemns, and as, to cut the matter short, I am convinced that the reputation of the man is the greatest obstacle to the thing.

“When therefore the minister of finance had me sounded by our mutual friends, I asked to be excused; but as under the circumstances of the case, this was impossible, if I remained present, I repeated my demand to travel.

“From this moment, the Comptroller-general, who thought he held me fast by means of our mutual friends and by necessity—as if there could be any necessity for a man to act against his conscience—considered me null and void; and 1st, breaking his formal word; 2nd, leaving me in embarrassments of all kind; 3rd, eluding my most simple demands, by a silence well or ill jus-

tified; 4th, replying to our mutual friends who frequently observed to him that it was not advisable to dissatisfy me: 'Oh! I will settle all that with money;' he successively, and especially by these last words which appeared to me an inexpressible insult, not only disengaged me from all connexion with himself, but gave me every possible reason for siding with the opposition.

"I however would not do so, nor have I done so. I wish to remain myself, and be myself only. But I thought I could and ought to be so entirely; and being unwilling that the only Assembly, in some degree national, that will probably exist in my time, should pass by without my paying my tribute to the public thing, I took up the subject least within the scope of men accustomed to write, and to which, in my judgment, it was most important to direct the public attention at this moment; and I denounced stock-jobbing to the King and the Assembly of Notables in a work which is not good, which was and must have been written too fast to be good, which is surcharged with matter because it is not methodically arranged, in which I have more meditated my subject than my plan *, but which was dictated by a strong and pure feeling that teaches sound and important truths, which will put well-

* Mirabeau afterwards almost literally transcribed this passage in his reply to the Lacroix, p. i. We shall hereafter have occasion to speak of this reply.

disposed minds in the right path, and which, if it does not destroy stock-jobbing—and this the government alone can totally eradicate—will, at all events, make it infamous to gamble in the funds and to protect stock-jobbers; for men of good sense and good faith ought to be convinced, and sophists can no longer escape*.”

The transcription inserted in Book III of the unpublished letter which Mirabeau intended to fulminate against M. de Calonne, renders it unnecessary to give in this place a lengthened notice of the “Denunciation of Stock-jobbing,” which with less method and precision, perhaps, treats precisely on the same subject, so much so indeed, that Mirabeau might have attained his object by publishing for the Notables, the letter he had destined for M. de Calonne, without writing a separate work, if he had not been desirous of avoiding the appearance of direct controversy, and of sparing the minister whose overthrow he foresaw †, and who,

* Letters to Mauvillon, p. 197 to 285.

† The notables assembled February 22nd 1787, and M. de Calonne was dismissed May 1st. Peuchet, no doubt did not carefully read “The Denunciation of Stock-jobbing,” although he has devoted to it a dozen pages; for he says, that in it the author was prodigal in his praises of M. de Calonne. (Vol. II. p. 80). M. Joseph Merilhou too makes the same mistake (p. 73). Others, on the contrary, have bitterly reproached Mirabeau with insulting a minister who had treated him so well. There is as much untruth as levity in these extraordinary statements.

The fact is, that Mirabeau himself, excited as he was against M. de Calonne, blamed the species of ingratitude shown towards a

whatever reason Mirabeau had to be dissatisfied with him, is not once named in the "Denunciation of

minister who had been flattered when he committed faults and persecuted the moment he attempted to repair them.

As for the convocation of the Notables, "the courage and dexterity," he says, "required by the execution, belongs to the minister; and when I see with what levity, or with what mistrust this benefaction is received, I am tempted to curse the thoughtlessness of my nation.

"The fermentation, however, is very strong in some good and civic heads, and I cannot, nor will I answer except for myself. But the feeling and intention of such an act deserve that it should not be censured, at least before it has proved a failure."—*Letters to Mauvillon*, p. 183.

Nevertheless, in doing justice to the meritorious, though arduous intentions of the minister, when at length his eyes opened to the faults he had committed, Mirabeau, in his private letters expressed warmly the censure which, in public, he passed in very measured terms.

"Are you not, my friend, greatly tempted to think that in my work or in my conduct, there is some impetuosity, some direct attack upon the minister, some failures in form? But you ought also to consider that at this moment I am not labouring under excitement. Well! I shall not cancel a single line. The Minister of Finance is named only once, and then in terms of praise. To tell you the truth, the great faults of his administration are all there as necessary consequences of stock-jobbing!—and the four pages of prophecies, on the non-abolition of stock-jobbing are, to well informed persons, a faithful history of his administration. But he must have named himself, for this to have appeared an insult to him. This is so true that the first cry of the jobbers and fanatics who support M. Necker was, that this book was written by M. de Calonne's order."—*Letters to Mauvillon*, p. 205.

Stock-jobbing," in which, near the end only, is a single designation that could be applicable to M. de Calonne.

It is against the manœuvres practised at the Stock exchange, that Mirabeau vehemently inveighs. He describes their fatal consequences. "Yes, and I swear to the truth of what I allege, the jobbing practised at Paris on stock, the eventual produce of which misleads the imagination, cannot but engender the most abominable of industries. What compensation does it offer, when its only result, its ultimate produce, is a frenzied gambling, in which millions have no other circulation than to pass from one portfolio to another, without creating anything but a group of illusions which the folly of the day leads about with pomp, and that of the next day will dispel *? But for this bait of gambling with paper, everywhere would undertakings have been attempted in agriculture or trade, profitable to everybody; marshes would have been drained, bridges built, canals cut, navigation improved, arts simplified, economical machinery invented, wages

* A proof, in fact, that Mirabeau's moderation, in this instance, was interpreted to his disadvantage, and attributed to a secret collusion between the minister and himself, exists in the "Memoirs of Bachaumont," vol. xxxiv, 1787, p. 265. We think that no doubt on the subject can remain in the minds of those who read the letter to M. de Calonne, inserted in Book III, of the present volume.

* Denunciatio of Stock-jobbing, p. 27.

paid, new outlets opened to produce, and a new use made of raw materials *. Such is the abuse of games of chance, and the spirit of lotteries. This fatal spirit, which came from Italy with the indirect taxation on consumption, has corrupted morals, caused mental aberration, made men unhappy, and will continue to produce the same evils, so long as the majority of Sovereigns are unaware that all the disorders of society diminish their authority, their power, and their wealth—so long as a prudent, virtuous, and severe education shall not teach nations that every game of chance is disgraceful in itself, because it is unworthy of an honest man either to seize the property of his neighbour, or to place in jeopardy that of his family†—so long as it shall not teach Kings that the expensive lotteries which reduce a large capital to uselessness and worse than uselessness, are still more dangerous than establishments of the same nature which absorb only the time and the bread of those who live by their daily earnings, but which, for this very reason, are deserving of the horror they generally inspire‡. To destroy stock-jobbing, is to save the state, restore its resources, and provide for its safety ; it is re-establishing good order ; it is restoring to the government, its dignity—to the public authority, its power—to the laws, their force ; it

* Page 119.

† Page 117.

‡ Page 120.

is preparing the way for public spirit, securing external peace, taking it into the family circle, bringing back talents to their proper use, and showing respect to things which are decent and useful. At this moment, when we feel that we must ask our too much neglected soil for that which a spendthrift son asks of his father's affection, the payment of his debts,—is it not time to confer honour upon rural industry? Must we not apply to our fields the specie which Paris absorbs, and absorbs only for purposes of corruption * ?”

Mirabeau now adverts to the operations of M. Necker's first administration, and begins a series of attacks against this celebrated financier.

“ Let us say, to be rigorously just, that one of the principal sources, and perhaps the real first cause of the revival of the stock-jobbing, which perished with Law's system, was that system, not less deceptive, invented by M. Necker, of meeting the expenses of the war by means of successive loans, without taxes†. How could he have expected that enlightened persons would not perceive that to delay taxation was only rendering the taxes ultimately more burthensome; and that, if he contrived to obtain a reputation of address and public sleight of hand, by putting off the impost, he left for his successors the still more diffi-

* Page 69.

† Page 72.

cult, and for that very reason the more meritorious, task of paying off those very debts which he had made it his glory to accumulate?

“How is it M. Necker never perceived that, the very moment the government raised loans, even the interest of which the public revenue could not pay, the impost virtually and necessarily existed, whether it was declared or not? In fact, if the state was to fulfil its engagements, it was impossible to avoid taxation in order to obtain that which under this supposition, did not yet exist; but then, the longer the impost was delayed, the heavier it must fall at last, from the accumulation of interest during the delay*. If even the state were some day or other to free itself by violating its engagements, the impost would not be less real, but only much more unjust and absurd, because, instead of bearing equally upon the whole nation, it would not, under the form of a bankruptcy, reach any but the lenders†.”

Mirabeau next applies the censure, which our readers have already seen, to the abuses of the *Caisse d'Escompte*, diverted from its real and salutary destination—to those of the India Company, useful to a few monopolists, but injurious to a very numerous class of manufacturers and merchants—to the shares of the

* Page 73.

† Page 74.

Water Company of Paris, to those of the Fire Insurance Company, to those of the Senegal Company—and to the stock-jobbing frenzy upon the paper issued by these several establishments—lastly, he raises his voice against the complication, incoherence, and incapacity of the public administration.

“ So long,” he says, “ as the kingdom is not settled by a regular constitution, we shall be only a society composed of different orders badly united, of a people with scarcely any social ties, an aggregate of provinces united under the same chief, but almost strangers to each other.”

He demands local provincial administrations.

“ It is by the help of this simple and sublime institution that France, regenerated by the sole will of its sovereign, will assume a permanent and imposing form. Then the public morals, that first tie of nations, will rest upon their only proper foundation, which is knowledge, acquired in infancy, of the duties of social man. After having long had no other establishments than those for the education of geometers and natural philosophers and painters, we shall at length possess institutions for the education of citizens. We shall soon be indebted to the provincial assemblies for a national instruction, directed in the same spirit, and on uniform political views and principles. Here the study of the duties of a citizen, member

of the great family, will be the foundation of every other, and will henceforth be placed in its order of usefulness, that is to say, quite at the head of useful things."

Mirabeau concludes his address to the Notables, as follows :—

" O ye, whom the father of the country has assembled to deliberate upon the public thing—O ye, the elders of its children !—treat not my sad forewarnings as groundless fears. Boldly point out to the King their probability in its fullest extent ;—boldly tell him that, during the last three years, we have had too certain indications of what we may expect from the system of finance under which we live ; that it is necessary for his happiness and glory, not to leave the least trace of such a system ; that, if stock-jobbing is not put down, and the severest animadversion applied to those who participate in this most deplorable species of gambling—if the privileged companies are not destroyed, and those companies that are necessary subjected to severe regulations, the public credit will be ruined ; that its rapid and deep decline is the more difficult to be stopped, in proportion to the impetus it has taken, and to the increased energy acquired by that of rival nations ; and that our finances will be irretrievably overthrown, their resources exhausted, and bankruptcy inevitable. Tell him that they who profess other maxims can only be enemies of the state * * * *

Tell him that the citizen who dares thus to speak in his own avowed name, ought to command some attention to the denunciation which he places at the foot of the throne ; for he cannot derive courage to do this, but from a sense of great and pressing danger.”

We must now notice a writing, published a month subsequently to the “ Denunciation of Stock-jobbing,” and bearing the following title : “ First Letter from the Count of Mirabeau, on M. Necker’s administration, in reply to M. de Lacretelle *.”

Mirabeau, in this work, returns to the principles he had before laid down, and attacks M. Necker still more directly, imputing to him “the system of loans without mortgage, which is evidently the origin of the revival of stock-jobbing ; the introduction to the Stock Exchange at Paris of Genevese, that fatal seed of stock-jobbers ; and the admission of bankers among the Directors of the *Caisse d’Escompte*.”

He further reproaches Necker with having written and manœuvred against Turgot, and “overthrown by his intrigues the only minister from whom hitherto France could expect regeneration ; with being absolutely ignorant of the principles of taxation, public credit, and loans—those he has effected, being the

* March 19th 1787, Paris, 8vo, eight pages. Lacretelle the elder (Pierre Louis) was born in 1751, and died in 1824.

dearest, the worst arranged, and the most ruinous that France has ever been compelled to pay." Lastly, to explain the violence of Mirabeau's language, this work contains, among others, the following sentence, which subsequent events have rendered remarkable, and which seems an anticipated justification of his parliamentary tactics.

"Can this country be regenerated or even reformed, if we do not attack persons as vehemently as we attack things?"

The "Denunciation of Stock-jobbing," made a strong impression upon the public mind. We learn this from Mirabeau himself.

"You will be pleased with the fine collection of letters which my work has brought me, both from the Notables, and from citizens of all classes. The King said: 'When the Count of Mirabeau serves the government, it must fain be with the same character of independence that he has always professed. All his observations are not, however, irreprehensible, because he is a man, and not a god. But after all, he has rendered us a great service *.'"

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame de Nehra, dated March 17th 1787. "This book has obtained prodigious success, a success beyond example, which, as a work, it was far from deserving, but which it perhaps deserved, as a service rendered with courage and dignity. The Notables, for the most part, the chiefs of public bodies,

MEMOIRS OF MIRABEAU.

Mirabeau again alludes to the subject in a subsequent ter.

"I tell you that all eyes are fixed upon me, because I have published a 'Denunciation of Stock-jobbing to the King and the Assembly of Notables,' which the good citizens expected with great impatience, the bad with great terror. In it I have pursued my subject without respect of things or persons You have no idea of the effect of this work, and I think it very possible that this effect will reach even the footstool of the sanctuary. Let what will happen, I am convinced that it was impossible to have rendered my country a greater service. One of my friends said to me, the other day: 'It is thus a man wins great respect; but it is thus also that he keeps himself out of every thing.' To which I replied, 'Is great respect nothing?' But this person is wrong according to his own meaning. The truth is, that he was completely seduced by the patron of stock-jobbing, who would himself have weakened my work in its most important results if, fortunately for the country, he had not taken off his mask, which, adding to my views for the public good a new a certain person that if I was good to be t and to be left, assisted me not ;

“ The Notables behaved admirably. Men are always honest the first time they are assembled ; they also evince energy and wisdom, extent of knowledge and foresight. This period will remain, for the King’s glory and the good of the nation. Meanwhile, the *pasquinades* run their course. In one, the wife of a mayor appears at Versailles in a gown of flowered silk ; an exquisite raises the gown, kisses it, and says : ‘ Pardon me, Madam ; but I adore antiquities ! ’ ‘ Ah ! Sir,’ is the reply, ‘ then why did you not say so at once ?—I am twenty years older than my gown.’ Another, is a print representing a farmer, who, on his return from seeing the Assembly of Notables, convokes the tenants of his poultry-yard, and thus addresses them : ‘ My dear animals, I have assembled you in order that you may deliberate upon what sauce I shall have you served up in.’ Whereupon a cock replies : ‘ We will not be eaten at all.’ ‘ You are wandering from the question,’ says the farmer, . . . It is a strange nation that which cannot receive either good or evil but with laughter ! * ”

It is well known that notwithstanding what was true in Mirabeau’s pamphlet, and what was praiseworthy in his display of courage and patriotism, the “ Denunciation of Stock-jobbing ” displeased the government †,

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame de Nehra, dated March 19th 1787,

† The work was suppressed by a decree in council, dated May 17th 1787.

and the author was persecuted. Mirabeau wrote on the subject to Madame de Nehra in the following terms :—

“ DEAR YET-LIE,

“ You must have received, from several quarters, by the courier who left on the 25th, many causes for alarm. It is so incredible that I should have been left quiet fourteen days to be stricken the fifteenth, that you could not have expected this ; but my success was too great to be overlooked. On the 20th an order from the King enjoined the Abbé d’Espagnac and Barraud * to leave Paris, and I received three letters, informing me that I should be arrested the same evening †. I was firmly resolved to make head against the storm ; but when I knew that the order was not for the Bastille, but for an old remote provincial fortress, where I should have been both lost to the public cause and forgotten in my personal cause, I yielded to the instances of my friends, especially those of the excellent Abbé de Perigord, who had returned from Versailles and exorcised me during five successive hours, to drive me away ‡.

* Celebrated stockjobbers.

† In the “ Letters to Mauvillon,” p. 223, is this passage of a letter from M. de Calonne to Mirabeau :—

“ It was not I who advised the order of which you complain. The Abbé de Perigord and Dupont told me, on Sunday March 18th, that they were going to give you notice *as from me*. I laughed, and replied ‘ very well ! ’ ”

Mirabeau adds : “ The fact is true, and paints the man.”

“ My friends insisted upon my departure ; I long hesitated,

I expect, then, dearest Yet-lie, that on receiving this letter, you will set off like lightning, by the road leading to Aix-la-Chapelle and Liège. I shall be at Tongres, which is at a very short distance from the latter place. You will inquire for Messrs. de Witry d'Everlange, canons, and you will soon behold your best friend. This time of trial will not be of long duration. If it were, you would, with your usual kindness, go to Paris, and settle my affairs.

“ The Count d'Entraigues and Luchet must have written to you, at the same time Jeanneret did, a letter, half alarming, half consolatory, containing a request to set out as soon as possible. Pray do not be uneasy; for, besides that I am in safety, there is nothing in all this but what is infinitely honourable to me, since the

should not have yielded had the Bastille been my destination; but I was to have been sent to a strong castle, in a distant province, where I should have been lost to the public cause, and forgotten in all that relates to myself personally. I therefore set out, determined to let the storm blow over. The time taken to form it sufficiently shows it to be the result of an intrigue which other intrigues will sufficiently oppose; for I must tell you, that two-thirds and a half, of the ministers, are in my favour.”—*Letters to Mauvillon*, p. 204.

Our quotations show that Mirabeau told the truth: the order was not executed; here is the proof of it.

“ March 18th 1787; the Register of orders bears that this order was not executed, although it had been signed and forwarded to M. de Crosne, then Lieutenant of Police.”—*Peuchet*, vol. iii. p. 103.

We must add, M. Peuchet was Archivist to the Prefecture de Police.

government has been obliged to perform an act of justice upon those I denounced *. And if, after all, they think proper to punish me for censuring too openly, in my book, certain decrees in council, does this detract from the glory of having rendered such a service to the nation?—and because a minister, against whom every public body in the state is rising, feels himself offended, think you that my case is any the worse? Let short-sighted persons say and believe this *.”

We borrow some further particulars from Madame de Nehra, who had remained at Berlin.

“ I was uneasy, in consequence of some vague expressions in one of Mirabeau’s letters ; and I received one from M. Panchaud, announcing the catastrophe. Amid the praises given to the ‘ Denunciation of Stock-jobbing,’ a seventeenth *Lettre de Cachet* was

* Mirabeau, however, pointed out, with very natural bitterness, the absurd inconsistency of punishing, at the same time and in the same manner, both the principal stock-jobbers and him who had denounced them.

“ And it is on account of this book that I am punished ! And this happens to me the same day, and with greater severity, than the wretches I denounced, whose robberies have desolated the kingdom for the last three years,—robberies attested by the King himself, who has banished them from Paris !—Complete, my friend, your study of men and Kings, in which you have already made such progress ; but do not pity me, for this will pass away,—and if it did not, I should be already consoled.”—*Letters to Mauvillon*, p. 206.

* Unpublished letter, already quoted, from Mirabeau to Madame de Nehra, dated March 23rd 1787.

issued against the author, who, being warned in time, and probably with the consent of the government, fled to Tongres, whither he entreated me to join him as soon as possible. I arrived at Tongres in the beginning of April, and did not find Mirabeau there. Some patriots of Liège had gone thither for him, and conducted him to their own city, where they entreated him to pass the time of his exile, and where he was sumptuously entertained. At Tongres I found a note from Mirabeau, making known to me the impending disgrace of M. de Calonne, and pressing me to join him at Liège forthwith."

During his short residence at Liège, Mirabeau wrote his "Second Letter on M. Necker's Administration." He now attacked the minister in a more direct and pressing manner, without at all concealing his object, that of preventing the Genevese financier from returning to office.

"If the Colossus of his reputation," observes Mirabeau, "appears to me waiting only for a stalworth arm to reduce it to a very ordinary statue, his financial talents which are the least questioned part of his glory, may from this very day be reduced to their just standard."

On the occasion of the pamphlet published by M. Necker to refute the financial statement presented to the Notables by M. de Calonne, Mirabeau reproaches the Genevese banker with tending to the overthrow of

the latter, as formerly Necker's book on the Corn Laws contributed to the dismissal of Turgot. Speaking of the voluntary errors attributed to M. de Calonne, Mirabeau maintains that a man cannot make a mistake, nor wish to lead others into a mistake of three hundred millions, in an addition so simple as that of the amount of public loans, notoriously effected in ten years. Is it not clear that M. de Calonne, and M. Necker do not agree as to the nature of the items which ought to form this sum; that there is a different enunciation, but neither fraud nor concealment on the part of M. de Calonne; that, in a word, they do not call the same things by the same names?"

Mirabeau, recurring to M. Necker's loans says: "I am at a loss to understand how he could make up his mind to speak, in his pamphlet, of the art with which he met the contingencies of the war without imposing taxes. This fatal act having served, at the same time, to obtain for him the stupid admiration of ignorant people, and to expose to the well-informed the culpable craftiness to which his vanity led him, it was time for him, on pain of being completely unmasked, to make up his mind clearly to refute my objections, or to stand condemned upon his principles. To prove to the public creditors that their interests were in no peril, it was necessary to shelter those of the people. To show that those of the people were respected, he must prove against me that wars without taxes are less

burthensome to the nation; that the borrowing of fresh capital to pay off arrears of interest, is a wise species of economy; and that delaying to impose taxes is diminishing them. * * * * But I say that which you impute to him as a merit constitutes his disgrace; that what you consider a benefit, is an aggravation of your evils. To borrow without imposing taxes, is giving up the county to usurers, who alone lend without security; it is deceiving a whole nation regarding their real situation; it is intoxicating governments, by presenting as easy those projects of destruction and expense that desolate mankind; it is throwing upon future generations the weight of the iniquities of a minister who looks only to his personal fame, and his present success. Crèdulous people?—hasten ye to admire him, for he will be cursed by your children!”

Mirabeau next defends himself against the imputation of having imprudently spread alarm, at the risk of endangering the public credit.

“I did not say that the state was insolvent, or could ever become so. In economy and its natural resources, there is and always will be enough to give security for necessary loans. I only maintained that a public loan has no other security than that which arises from taxation. These two scourges must always go hand in hand.”

M. Necker had but feebly defended the principal question to which Mirabeau constantly reverted.

"I was the accusative tribunal," says Mirabeau, "in 1791, when I was known to be about the verities of the law, and the delirium of securities, and who still asked me they can have Govt. the State, and the King, without whipping M. Necker, whether the question is not evidently eluded the conclusion!—whether he has not, as clearly as possible, shown manifestation in the theory of loan without taxes,—whether his conduct and virtue* will remain proof sufficient of his theory after having been the proof of his calculations. Such were the founders of sects: they proved their mission by their miracles, and their miracles by their mission."

Mirabeau sets forth by arguments, by calculations and by comparative tables, that M. Necker's loan might have been effected on terms much less burthensome to the state. After some able developments, but written with unpardonable violence, with a tone of personal hatred, and with furious rage, he protests against the probability of M. Necker's return to office.

"The King," he says, "who is the guardian of his people's honour, will never sanction a foreigner being placed at the helm of state, as essentially necessary to the public credit, as the only man able to administer our finances. What on earth has this foreigner done,

* In the simplicity of his pride, M. Necker wrote: "Ah! (I ought to be allowed to say it) the best proof of the truth of the account of 1781, is the character of him who wrote it!"

that twenty millions of Frenchmen should prostrate themselves round his chariot? He has not given a single proof of real talent!—his loans have been dear and ill-combined!—the efforts to which the people are now called, are due, in great part, to the faults of his administration! And this man is to wield the destinies of France!—and we are to be made believe that the Assembly of Notables desire it should be so, and call for his return to office! * * * * *

“ No!—an Assembly, which France would not disavow to represent her, will not deserve such cruel reproaches! These worthy citizens feel their power and their duties; they know what value to set upon the resources which order, economy, reform, the virtuous intentions of the King, his generous example, his courageous resolution, and the incalculable riches of the country afford all the servants of the government. That France, so lauded by M. Necker himself, has certainly not become unfruitful since the Genevese banker has ceased to govern it. And what is there alarming in our situation? We know our engagements better, no doubt, but we also know our resources. They are such, that this debt, at which people would alarm us, can no longer surprise any but the narrow-minded or the evil-intentioned. The sinking fund, restored to its natural activity, and replaced under the wise regulations originally framed for it, would lead us to a liquidation, slow, it is true,

but certain, and which would not be hastened by M. Necker, who has dared to decry it, because it was invented by another. What more is required? This sole declaration—that the King's subjects ought to, will, and can pay all public engagements whatever; that they will face these engagements from devotedness to him and his august dynasty, from a due sense of his confidence, and from respect for the national faith. . . . Such a declaration, which all good citizens expect from the Assembly of Notables, will open all the sources of credit, confidence, zeal, and affection; and it is not from an ambitious foreigner that we shall have to learn either to direct the wealth with which nature has overloaded us, nor the rules of political economy taught by the sages of Europe, nor those properly termed, of finance, (the English, who are the most calculating people in the universe, have just copied the sinking fund established in France,) nor the example of the most unlimited attachment to those principles of honour, on which, in all ages, we have given lessons to nations."

However vexed the government might have been * at the time, it could not long remain irritated at views so patriotic, principles of finance so judicious, and obser-

* This letter on Necker's administration, and that in reply to Lacretelle, were both suppressed by a decree in Council, dated June 6th 1787.

vations so just, that, if we mistake not, they are now more striking than ever, even after half a century has elapsed of political and financial vicissitudes.

Thus, we find in Madame de Nehra's Memoirs, that Mirabeau's exile was but of short duration.

" I did not read his work on stock-jobbing till I was at Liège. I could not help blaming some exaggerated expressions, and some personalities which appeared to me too thoughtlessly advanced. But the period of misfortune is not one for finding fault, so I had not the courage to say much to him. We concerted together means to get this *lettre de cachet* cancelled, as it was an inconvenient thing to be hanging over us. A woman is always the surest and most active of friends : Mirabeau was convinced of this truth, and always trusted to me on awkward occasions. It was therefore decided that I should hasten to Paris, stimulate the zeal of his friends, and again harass the minister *."

Here follow some domestic details, which we think interesting, and which are certainly characteristic of Mirabeau. We therefore transcribe them.

" I have already said that he was careless in money matters, but it is incredible to what extent he neglected his pecuniary affairs. After talking to him about the dangers he had run, I wished to ask him some questions concerning his dispute with his father,

* Unpublished Memoirs of Madame de Nehra.

whom nothing on earth could induce him to sue before the courts of justice, but to whom he applied in vain for payment of the pension settled on him.

“ ‘ Yes, à-propos,’ said he, ‘ I wanted to ask you how far I have got on in this business ? ’

“ ‘ What can I know of it,’ I replied, ‘ at a distance of three hundred leagues from Paris? Your journey thither was undertaken partly to settle the matter. You must have seen M. Treilhard * and M. Gérard de Mesley, and you ask me——’

“ ‘ I ! ’ said he, interrupting me. ‘ No, truly. I scarcely saw Vignon † for a moment. I had something else to do than attend to all these trifles. Do you know what a crisis we are in?—do you know that horrible stock-jobbing is at a climax?—do you know we have reached a period when there is not perhaps a crown left in the public treasury ? ’

“ I smiled at seeing a man whose purse was so ill lined, think so little about it, and yet feel so afflicted at the public distress, without caring about his own private distress. He perceived it.

“ ‘ Well, well, my friend,’ said he, ‘ you are here at

* Treilhard (Jean Baptiste), then an advocate, afterwards member of the Constituent Assembly, of the Convention, of the Council of Five Hundred, of the Court of Cassation, of the Executive Directory, of the Imperial State Council, of the Senate, &c. &c. He was born in 1742, and died in 1810.

† Procurator in the Parliament of Paris, and trustee in the interdict laid upon Mirabeau.

last ; settle it all as you please. I approve beforehand of all you may do. These matters are now in your hands, and I have nothing more to do with them.'

" When I was going to set out, it was another farce. Mirabeau took it into his head to accompany me. In vain did I oppose his resolution : not having seen me before for three months, he could not make up his mind to quit me, and he promised me all the prudence I should demand ; but I well knew that it was impossible for him to keep his promise. He did not, however, enter Paris immediately, but remained at St. Denis, where he had appointed some friends to meet him. I proceeded to the hotel de Gênes, whence I wrote to the Baron de Breteuil, to begin my solicitations. I thought I should have had five or six days to concert measures ; but Mirabeau, tired of staying at St. Denis, arrived unexpectedly at the hotel. I was ready to die of fright ; in vain did I take precautions—by his imprudence he rendered them useless. Panchaud's servants said in the ante-chamber, to my maid—

" 'It is of no use your saying that the Count of Mirabeau is at Liège; we know his voice too well ; there—he is speaking now ; nobody else talks with such vehemence.'

" This was reported to me, and I was in an agony of fear. I did not cease employing all my friends. The Baron de Breteuil had told me that the King was

very angry ; I also knew what a number of enemies Mirabeau had, and my fear was well founded. I at length made up my mind to confide to the Baron de Breteuil the secret of Mirabeau's arrival at the hotel, and I threw myself upon his generosity. I must admit that he did not betray my confidence. The *lettre de cachet* was not cancelled ; but it was not carried into execution. Mirabeau appeared everywhere, and the ministers shut their eyes *."

Mirabeau remained but a short time at Paris. On the 24th of May 1787, he set out on a third journey to Prussia, in order to complete his great work. In a letter he wrote on the road, we find an affecting passage, in which he expresses a wish never to be realised, and the accomplishment of which his moral temperament, perhaps, as well as his destiny, rendered impossible.

“ DEAR YET-LIE,

“ In crossing the beautiful country near Strasburg, and looking from Saverne upon the enchanted landscape discovered from this magnificent point of view on both banks of the Rhine, I felt that if the devil wished to tempt me, he would take care not to place me upon a high mountain. Ambition here left my heart,

* Unpublished memoirs of Madame de Nehra.

and I said to myself: 'Ah! how happy should I be, disabused of men and things, to cultivate my garden here, and to live only for my friend and my son *!' "

Mirabeau remained three months at Brunswick, whither he went, to seek assistance from Major Mauvillon†, who, from his office, and indefatigable study and research, possessed most of the information which Mirabeau had originally required to give to the French government, on the constitution and military administration of Prussia. Though there was no secret in either, for the Prussian authorities concealed nothing, still correct information concerning them could be obtained nowhere but in Prussia.

These communications from Mauvillon are very

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame de Nehra, dated June 1st 1787.

† James Mauvillon, born in 1743, was Major of Engineers, and Professor at Brunswick. He translated Mirabeau's "Prussian Monarchy" into German; also the following French works:—"Madame de Sevigné's Letters," the "Philosophical History of the Two Indies," by the Abbé Raynal, Turgot's "Dissertation on Riches," and Malouet's "Letters on the French Revolution." He translated into French "The History of the Seven Years' War," by Tempelhoff. He also wrote several original works: "Essay on the Influence of Gunpowder in the Art of Modern Warfare," "Introduction to all the Military Sciences," "Historical Essay on the Art of War, during the Thirty Years' War," "Biography of Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick," &c. This able, learned, and laborious man, whose merit and literary works did not, however, preserve him from poverty, died at Brunswick, January 10th 1794.

publicly known, for Mirabeau stated them at the beginning of the work of which they form the materials. They are also stated at great length in a collection of letters from Mirabeau to Mauvillon, published forty years ago, and containing five hundred pages of letter-press. Some people have inferred from this that Mauvillon was really the author of the "Prussian Monarchy;" that Mirabeau having purchased with money the labour of another, and that his own share of the work had been limited to the composition of some preambles, and recapitulations; mere show-pieces, more or less stamped with his energetic touch.

We shall make no great effort to refute such an assertion; for it has already been explained away by a person much better informed than ourselves, and much more entitled to belief—that is to say, by Major Mauvillon himself. To refute a contrary error, and show the injustice of some of his countrymen, who denied him the really immense share he had taken in Mirabeau's work, the Major published, in 1794, a hundred letters which Mirabeau had written to him on this subject between August 12th 1786, and October 18th 1790.

Mauvillon thus expresses himself on the subject—

"One of the strongest passions of the Count's friend *, is being useful to the human species. He had

* Mauvillon himself.

already attempted to satisfy this passion by the production of several works, and more especially by a development of some of the great truths of political economy. But whether from mediocrity of talent, from want of authority, or from awkwardness or misfortune, all he wrote on the subject had caused but little sensation. Under these circumstances, a celebrated writer encouraged him to reproduce these things, adding to them a number of new matters, supported by facts known, admitted, and recorded in a thousand works. He undertook to adorn them with the magic of his style, to support them with the authority of his name, and to publish them in the language the most diffused throughout Europe. May he perish who would here reproach the Count of Mirabeau with not having written 'The Prussian Monarchy!' The mother conceives the imperceptible germ by an instantaneous act; from this moment she does every thing for this germ, even to its full development. Still she can produce nothing without this germ—everybody says that the father procreated the child, which even bears his name, and not that of the mother.

“Such is the history of 'The Prussian Monarchy.' The germ came solely from the Count's brain; it is the pure fruit of his genius. He threw it into the soul of his friend, who would never have thought of it alone, nor, in fact, ever have been able to produce such a work. The Count did more. After his friend had

fed, extended, and brought this germ into the world, like a true father, he took care of its education, reset some healthy but dislocated members, removed some wens, effaced some unpleasant stains, and clothed it in garments calculated to make it cut an advantageous figure in the world *."

Having thus freely transcribed the above declaration from a book entirely unknown in France, because it has scarcely reached that country, and had it done so, a few eloquent passages would have been passed over without observation, buried as they are under four hundred pages of uninteresting details ;—having thus given the testimony of the respectable Major, we need go no further into the question. It would be easy for us to prove, by the very letters published by Mauvillon, that he still very much underrates the labour of revision, recasting, and additional elaboration which Mirabeau really performed ; but no one refuses to the latter the honour of the plan, the principal contexture, and the philosophical and political generalities which bear his imprint, and form the real merit of the work. With regard to the remainder, that is to say, the researches, translations, extracts, recapitulations—in a word, the information of every description supplied to Mirabeau by Major Mauvillon, whose knowledge and genius are too little known, we wish the fact were a

* Letters to Mauvillon, pp. 15 and 16.

known, that we might be the first to mention it, and thereby do honour to his memory, certain as we are that it would not injure that of Mirabeau. We shall only add, that the circumstance of such joint labour is easy to be understood, as assuredly the materials of state papers, transformed afterwards into a statistical work, had nothing of what constitutes an original creation, but really formed a labour of mere compilation and elaboration.

We think, however, that no doubt can exist on the question, after a perusal of the following extract from a letter which Mirabeau wrote, August 22nd 1787, to Madame de Nehra, the confidante of his most secret thoughts, the witness of his labours, and the last person in the world before whom he would or could have attributed to himself the work of another.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ When this work appears I shall be about eight-and-thirty years of age. I dare to predict that it will raise me a name *. May-be it will cause my country some regret that such an observer should be left un-

* “ No idea can be formed how greatly this production raised, I do not say the author, but the man, in the public opinion ;—thus, no one was surprised at the lead he afterwards took in France.”—*Memoirs of Fauche-Borel*. Paris : Moutardier, 1829. 4 vols. 8vo. Vol. i. p. 52. The reader, if he follows our narrative, will not be surprised at our quoting the obscure memoirs of Fauche-Borel, of which we shall soon have to speak.

employed, and that such a work should be ill rewarded. But it cannot happen that elsewhere a wish to obtain his services will not be felt ; and the proposals I should have, or have perhaps already refused, or at least eluded, I should now accept the moment it became evident to me that my country rejected my services."

After such explanations, it is not necessary for us to say that, whatever elements or materials were obtained from Major Mauvillon, and from other individuals, as well as from public archives, the system adopted, the composition as a whole, and even the writing of the " Prussian Monarchy," were entirely the work of Mirabeau. Besides the enormous mass of documents entirely in Mauvillon's handwriting, we have two manuscripts of this work. The first, containing more than half, is in Mirabeau's hand, and bears the stamp of assiduous and troublesome, though rapid labour. The second manuscript is in a strange hand, but with numerous autograph corrections by Mirabeau ; and this evidently was the copy sent to the printer.

We have anticipated our narrative a little in order to enable the reader to pass judgment upon the imputations of plagiarism cast upon Mirabeau, with regard to this work. We shall now retrograde for an instant, and state some circumstances connected with his stay at Brunswick to complete his " Prussian Monarchy."

Whilst occupied with this great undertaking, he did not neglect some other works necessary to his domestic wants, not less than to the activity of his mind, for which he had now no hope of finding employment in a public career. Events had not yet opened this career to him, and he was then kept from it by indifference, uneasiness, or aversion on the part of the government. He wrote from Brunswick as follows :—

“ If my friends, or those calling themselves so, serve me well, after the appearance of my work on the Prussian Monarchy, it will be easy to convince the government of the extreme utility of publishing a similar work on England* and France. With 30,000 francs, for instance, I could produce in two or three years, a work of the same kind upon England, with this great difference, that the results would contain still greater variety, and be more important in themselves ; and having on the one hand more labour,

* “ Such a work on England would have been a thousand times easier, more brilliant, and more sought after ; but it was on this very account that, without renouncing this excellent project, I thought it my duty to begin with what was within the reach of fewer Frenchmen, on account of their want of acquaintance with the German language, and our trifling knowledge of Germany, compared with that propagated by public instruction and discussion, in a country where there are no mysteries nor secrets, nor even absolute ignorance.”—*Introduction to the Prussian Monarchy*, vol. i. p. 13 of the 4to edition.

In his letters to Mauvillon, Mirabeau often alludes to this project of writing upon England.

I should on the other find greater facility. This great work, which, for fame only, I would undertake on my own account, if I were in possession of the fortune that will one day be mine, would be of unquestionable use to general instruction, and perhaps it may one day be known that instruction is a resource in finances *."

Mirabeau, though dissatisfied with the ministers, was at this time devoting his mind to the political interests of his own country.

"The Duke† informed me yesterday that we are going to send twelve thousand men to Givet under the command of M. de Rochambeau. Have we at length come to a determination with regard to your country?‡" I write by this post to the Abbé de Perigord, who, I beg, will inform either M. de Montmorin or the Archbishop§ that the Duke of Brunswick set out this night to take the command, as field-marshal, of the Prussian army now assembling in Westphalia; that I do not make this communication for mere pleasure, the government having taken good care to prevent me from feeling any interest in its administration and its glory, but that I may not be accused of indecently and dis-

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame de Nehra, dated July 18th 1787.

† Of Brunswick.

‡ Letter above quoted, dated July 13th 1787.

§ M. de Brienne, former minister, afterwards Archbishop of Sens, and a Cardinal.

loyally remaining in an enemy's country, or nearly so. I have added, that if they find fault with my remaining here until the beginning of September, the probable period of the completion of my work, I hope that the Abbé, in his friendship, will let me know it. Apply on the same subject, I beg of you, to the Baron of Breteuil, either in writing or *vivâ voce*, in order that I may be right on all sides, and that if the Abbé should be absent, my precautions may be taken equally well*.

“ The Duke is continuing his march, which he had suspended for a short time, in consequence of news of the death of the Elector Palatine given in all the public papers, but of which there is yet no authentic confirmation. He is now going to take for good, the command of the army of Westphalia, where I consider him rather an armed mediator than an avowed enemy. Once more, my situation is becoming delicate; and although what I am doing here is well known, and I work day and night with extreme diligence, I do not think I shall have finished before the 15th of September. This is a long time to be away from you, in a country where I am loaded with kindness and respect, but where, nevertheless, I cannot but be suspected the moment the interests of the country become diametrically opposed to those of France”†.

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame de Nehra, dated July 29th 1787.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated July 30th 1787.

A circumstance occurred at this period, at which Mirabeau was much affected. No man was more devoted to friendship, or more capable of gratitude. He was very intimate, as we have already stated, with Panchaud the banker, to whom he was under obligations. Panchaud was dismissed from an important appointment in the finance department; Mirabeau felt this severely, and wrote on the subject as follows:

“ You inform me, my dear friend, of Panchaud’s dismissal. I am shocked and grieved at this. What! —in the crisis under which they are now striving, at a time when all possible skill will be perhaps insufficient to conciliate internal embarrassments with external dignity, they dismiss the only man who can make the hen lay her golden eggs without ripping her open! He who has brought from five to six millions into the public treasury, and founded the *Caiss ed’Ameortissement*, and the sinking fund, is dismissed at fifty years of age; and they who have dismissed him do not think that they have committed an iniquitous and barbarous action! This is inconceivable, and if it afflicts me with grief, it overcomes me with rage. Thus, then, is this poor man cast into the abyss dug by his own services, by the very benefits he has conferred. . . . My friend, you guess all I would say. . . . It would be imprudent to let my heart pour forth all its feelings; but it is almost broken—for, during my life, it has received few shocks more severe than this. I know not even whether I ought to write or not to the unfor-

tunate man. If the marks of sensibility which I might evince did not aggravate his situation—for how must they hate him for all the evil they have inflicted upon him—provided he resists the counter blow, events will avenge him sufficiently; but may the reparation not be too slow for his dreadful situation *.

Mirabeau went on with his work.

“ I persevere and hasten on, without departing from the most scrupulous fidelity, and I am beginning to see land; but the amusements of the court †, where I am made too much of, delay me a good deal, and these amusements occur almost every day at this period, when there are so many strangers here ‡.”

At the end of August, Mirabeau was sufficiently near the conclusion of this task to dispose of his work.

“ I begin with good news, my dear Yet-Lie; I have closed with Fauche for 20,000 francs. We have, however, kept open till October 20th, the faculty of breaking off the bargain; but this is more especially because he requires the ratification of a man who is his security. I am to fix upon the paper, the type, and the form. He begs I will see the work through the press, and I have asked to be allowed till the end of Septem-

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame de Nehra, dated August 2nd 1787.

† The court of the Duchess of Brunswick.

‡ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame de Nehra, dated August 6th 1787.

ber to determine upon this, as well as upon the agreement of sale. The only object of this clause is to ascertain whether you can make up your mind to come and spend a few months at Hamburgh. Another equally important point remains to be settled. I have the greatest wish to show my work to my friends, and especially to Panchaud, and to the Abbé de Perigord whose eagle eye is infinitely necessary to its perfection. I do not, however, know in what situation I stand with your fickle and fantastic administration; and there is no occasion for me to risk any thing by returning to France. Lose not an instant in replying to me, for I am only waiting for your answer to embark for Hamburgh. I cannot, however, believe that the gates of France are closed against me; for why should they be? And why should they not? Ask M. de Breteuil yourself, and get M. de Malesherbes to ask the Archbishop of Toulouse, whether there is any danger in my returning *.

“Fauche wished to place my portrait at the beginning of the work. I sent his ugly wish to the deuse, and advised him to substitute that of Fredrick II—which he will do †.

“I am making as much haste as I can, because th

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame de Nehra, dat August 20th 1787.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated Aug 22nd 1787.

political horizon is becoming so dark that I much fear circumstances will soon deprive me of Major Mauvillon. A great convoy of artillery passes tomorrow through Pymont on its way to the frontiers of Holland. Will the King of Prussia become a party? Will he seize this opportunity to claim Guelderland, or will he remain only an armed spectator of what the 50,000 men are going to do, whom the Emperor is sending into the Austrian Netherlands? These, as you may well suppose, are questions which I am unable to answer. What is certain is, that Field Marshal the Duke of Brunswick seems perfectly quiet here. But it is the lion's sleep! Poor Netherlands!—how many bloody executions are about to take place there! How is it that they have carried matters to such lengths, if they had no means of supporting their resolution? And why do they spoil so good a cause by showing at least as much effervescence in favour of religious brotherhoods and pilgrimages, as for the most sacred of their political privileges? Be all these matters as they may, a very honourable thing has occurred to me: the King, knowing that I was writing a work on Prussia, sent me permission through the Duke, to examine all the papers of L. This shows that they are not afraid that the truth should be published, and that they are not without esteem for the publisher *.”

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame de Nehra, dated

Although this great work was finished August 1787, it was not published till a year later. It is,

August 25th 1787. If the reader bear in mind that this is a strictly confidential letter, written to a woman who was Mirabeau's most intimate friend, he will be struck with the thoughtlessness of several of Mirabeau's biographers—with that, for instance, of P. Chaussard, one of Mirabeau's most enthusiastic admirers. This is what he states concerning the "Prussian Monarchy."

"Successfully employing the secrets of that *science* politely termed politics, he corrupted clerks, obtained rare documents and despatches, sacrificed with judgment subalterns,—all hateful, but certain means—and gave the French Government most important information, of which it took no advantage."—P. 50 of "*Summary of the Life*" placed at the beginning of the "*Esprit de Mirabeau*."

This is a black calumny invented by the writer; and if before Chaussard published it, he had taken the trouble to read the correspondence from Berlin, he would have known that Mirabeau had not the least difficulty in procuring purely statistical information, because, in Prussia and throughout Germany, such information may be obtained by any person desirous of satisfying his curiosity.

In the ensuing page, the same writer states that Mirabeau was compelled to quit Berlin at twenty-four hours' notice. This fact, invented by Chaussard, and embellished with a scandalous story to which we shall presently revert, is just as true as the former; yet it has been copied by Cadet Gassicourt in his "Essay on the Private Life, &c."—p. 31, of the first edition and 32 of the second. But this latter writer himself proves, without intending it, the untruth of his story, for he says that the cause of Mirabeau's expulsion from Berlin was "his imprudence in publishing his book." Now, it is certain, and any one may ascertain the fact, that Mirabeau quitted Berlin only three times—May 10th 1786, January 19th 1787, and August 26th 1787—and the "Prussian Monarchy" did not appear till after August 19th 1788. The tale of the pretended expulsion from Berlin is repeated at p. 95, vol. xxix. of the "*Biographie Universelle*."

therefore, in the part of our work corresponding with that period, that we must give an account of "the Prussian Monarchy," otherwise we should violate the chronological order of events.

It is true that, from time to time, we have swerved from this order for reasons derived either from comparisons of works, or from a wish to pursue, without digression or interruption, recitals in which the interest, or if we may so term it, the physiognomy of facts would have been altered by a contrary method.

But here we are induced, by a particular reason, not to interrupt the regular course of events. A great part of the present Book has been devoted to giving an account of the "Denunciation of Stock-jobbing," a pamphlet which formed a very remarkable incident in one of the great events of our history—we allude to the convocation of the Notables. Its consequences, so far as they regard Mirabeau, ought, therefore, to be included in the present division of our narrative. Our analysis of the work shows the known and public share he had in the event; it is now our duty to show him in another capacity, which, although it has remained secret, and unknown up to the present time, is no less honourable, we venture even to say, no less glorious to his memory.

* The dedicatory epistle at the beginning of the "Prussian Monarchy," is dated August 19th 1788.

We have stated that Madame de Nehra assured Mirabeau he might return to Paris without uneasiness. He accordingly set out and reached that capital at the end of September 1787 *.

* Having gone from Berlin to Hamburg, he came by sea from the latter place. The passage proved very dangerous. The following are some particulars written at the time, on board the vessel :—

“ I do not yet know whether you will receive this letter, that is to say, whether it will not go to the bottom with me. Within the last seventeen days, I have encountered three storms, in each of which we were nearly lost; and even at this time a dreadful gale from the south-west is forcing us back through the Pas-de-Calais which we had passed, and will, probably, drive us into the high sea. It is an inconceivable destiny, that of being so tossed about during so short a passage and in the present season of the year. However, as I think drowning too vulgar an issue for me, and that even, in the chances that torment me, this is too favourable a one to be presumed, I begin this letter, sure of being occupied with the agreeable thought of a kind and dear friend, if the Fates have determined that I shall end here; and you will derive no uneasiness from reading these lines, as they cannot be sent to the post-office unless I arrive I feel great enthusiasm in our work (the “ Prussian Monarchy ”),—so much so that I have never yet seen my last moment in these seventeen days of tempest, though the dice have been often thrown, yet without the regret at this precious manuscript perishing with me being immediately followed by agony at the thought of the embarrassment in which I should leave my friend and my son.” *Letters to Mauvillon*, p. 268.

It cannot be denied that this is sufficiently authentic; and yet one of our predecessors, always as ill-informed as the others, and as fertile in invention as many,—we mean P. Chaussard, has thought proper to make Mirabeau travel by land, in order to attribute to him a scandalous adventure on the road. In page 51 of the “ Summary ” placed at the beginning of the “ *Esprit de Mirabeau*,” the author pretends that Mirabeau, having stopped accidentally at

Five months had already elapsed since the assembling of the Notables. With a brilliant reputation for learning, dexterity, and even administrative skill, Leomenie de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, considered that in their labours lay the opportunity he sought, of satisfying an ambition by which he had long been goaded. Vain, confident, fluent in speech, bold in carrying on an easy opposition, he had gained some degree of influence over the Notables, and placed himself at their head. He had constantly and perseveringly opposed the plans of M. de Calonne, who, long defended by the court, had at length fallen under the unanimous reprobation of the organs of public opinion, whom the King obeyed without conviction : for he long hesitated to separate himself from the man

Nancy, fell in love with an actress there, with whom he lost a night and his purse ; and having borrowed the purse of his secretary proceeded on his journey.

Even supposing for the sake of argument, that he undertook another journey at another period, we cannot believe in the truth of the anecdote : first, because the fact has always been unknown to Madame de Nehra, whom we questioned on the subject, and to Madame du Saillant to whom Mirabeau willingly, and without scruple or concealment, related even his most secret adventures ; next, and principally, because Mirabeau, notwithstanding his mad passion for women, had always a horror of those who make a traffic of their charms ; as he has always a profound disgust for intemperance, gaming, and debauchery.

The same tale is related in the work entitled " History of the Donjon of Vincennes," Vol. III, p. 251. It was, no doubt, from this book that it was copied by Chaussard.

whose administration, joined to other causes, had prepared the catastrophe which that man's dismissal from office was to hasten.

The Archbishop of Toulouse having reached the object of his ambition, was forced to give way, in his turn, to the irresistible force of things. As minister, he had resumed those very plans which he had rejected as the leader of a party—plans which, for thirteen years past, the country would not accept from M. Turgot nor from M. Necker, who were reproached with the stiffness and pride of their virtue; nor from M. de Calonne, who, with much greater reason, was suspected of amiable immorality and brilliant vices.

The first Assembly of the Notables broke up July 27th 1787, and the result of its labours showed, in two contrary senses, the extreme incapacity of the two ministers: he who fell from having assembled them, and he who survived their meeting.

The former had called them together in order to confine within a limited circle a discussion which the general fermentation throughout the nation was rendering too public, and to avoid a convocation of the States-General. But every shade of opinion without, found an echo in the Assembly of Notables; and, although composed of individuals carefully chosen from the privileged orders, patriotism raised its bold voice in the Assembly. 'Though called together for the mere purpose of receiving limited communi-

cations in silence, and giving inert counsels, the Notables assumed more active duties. They expressed doubts of the reality of the deficit; they demanded, nay, insisted upon, and forcibly obtained the proofs long refused to them; they virtually took a share in the government, and thus opened the road in which the parliament advanced after them, and perished in its turn; but which the National Assembly entered after the parliament, and successfully threaded its intricacies.

The latter minister obtained, it is true, from the Notables, what he wanted, at least to all appearance. They gave their sanction, in part formally, in part tacitly, to the territorial subvention, the increase of the stamp duty, the free trade in corn, the abolition of average labour, and the Provincial Assemblies. The public opinion so strongly sympathised in these concessions, that it would have overcome the parliaments themselves, if the government, taking advantage of so decisive an opportunity, had placed them in a situation either to lose their popularity at once by a refusal, or to sanction measures which, by increasing the revenues of the state, whilst a system of judicious economy was introduced to diminish the expenditure, would have provided for a long time, if not for ever, against the crisis in the finances, and would thereby have put a stop to, or at least have delayed, the threatened revolution.

But the unskilful minister committed an irreparable

whose administration, joined to have acted, by prepared the catastrophe which some calm—the from office was to hasten. opposition time to

The Archbishop of To its time to prepare a object of his ambition, v hastening forward, he turn, to the irresistibl known reason for doing so. he had resumed the , amid unanimous applause, taking as the leader of s at the territorial subvention, which past, the cou only the privileged orders, all the others nor from M. only taxed, the minister grouped this tax stiffness r stamp duties, which was to bear upon the lonne, tion, and which the recent example of Ame of ar rendered, to a certain degree, unpopular. As if to effect a fear which he should not have admitted, and to excite a resistance previously impossible but then any, the minister, in presenting measures to the necessity of which public reason assented, inconsiderately imparted to his acts the hateful forms of despotism. The parliament taking advantage of the opportunity, so injudiciously offered, to conceal selfish private interests under the disguise of the general interest, refused to register the stamp duties, to which it would willingly have consented in lieu of the territorial subvention, the refusal to admit which it did not dare to avow. At the same time, inveighing against abuses, and prodigality, it demanded a convocation of the States-general. An order of exile * was the reply

* August 15th 1787.

who, acting in an inverse sense to his interests, committed the double the parliaments the dangerous might have deprived them, that their own advantage, the nation ace the minister might so easily have against them.

once presumptuous and unskilful, ignorant and headstrong, pusillanimous and violent, the prime minister had placed himself at the head of the administration without any energy or real talent; and under the most difficult circumstances he did not appear to have a correct notion of the difficulties before him, nor any fixed plan by which they could be obviated.

We have reason to believe that the Archbishop of Toulouse had an idea of employing Mirabeau, who, however, thought unfavourably of the events that had taken place during his absence.

He had previously written —

“ As I can very well abstain when I command myself to do so, but as even in commanding myself to abstain, I could not change my principles and opinions, I shall turn my views, and devote my labours to another career, as my country is so unworthy of being served in my present *.”

* Letters to Mauvillon, p. 230.

Always irritated at the persecution drawn upon himself by his bold "Denunciation of Stock-jobbing," he had lately written—

" The opposition cry out in my favour as loudly as it is possible to cry out in this country—that is to say, not very loud, but still loud enough for these rumours, combined with my absence, which is more alarming than my presence, to awe that part of the cabinet that holds me in execration, because it could not corrupt me. Advances, therefore, are already being made to me . . . but I must know before anything else, what it is they intend doing. Such, however, is the concomitant of a good conscience, of the love of good seconded by a little talent, and of the public censure passed upon great criminals. I know that barbarous tyrants have destroyed the noble geniuses that noted their crimes; but have they destroyed the glory of these geniuses, and prevented from germinating, and being reproduced, the instruction which they had sown? My friend, civic virtue (which presupposes courage) is the only thing beyond the power of tyranny. Quacks have no power over it; their injustice adds to its glory; virtue aggrandises itself on its ruins, its losses enrich it; its wounds animate its courage; its fall inspires it with fresh vigour; in death it finds life; each century, even in becoming corrupt, places a crown at the foot of its statue *."

* Letters to Mauvillon, p. 209.

We return to the period from which our narrative now proceeds. Mirabeau, on his return to France, wrote as follows :—

“ I am arrived, overcome with fatigue, and I find to comfort me all the horrors of opprobrium and madness, conspiring for the destruction of my country *.

“ It is impossible for a man who thinks and feels, not to be struck with consternation ; and it is not given to human wisdom to guess where all this will end †.”

Equally mistrustful of the principles, plans, and ultimate success of the minister, Mirabeau maintained a prudent reserve. This is evident, from the following reply to one of the most intimate familiars of the Archbishop of Toulouse.

“ I have received your letter with more gratitude than surprise.

“ However disposed I might have felt to think favourably of you, I earnestly wished, or rather I promised myself, that the most formidable trial to which a man, especially a young man, can be exposed—I mean unexpected prosperity—would keep you modest,

* Mirabeau wrote about the same time : “ The Parliament is not exiled ; it has only received orders to administer justice at Troyes. This is an absurd horror.” *Letters to Mauvillon*, p. 258.

† *Ibid.* p. 272.

intact, and alive to the recollections of absent and silent friendship.

“ I had, however, sufficiently followed your progress since your return from Germany, to foretel your personal success. I promised myself that you would do much. But it was difficult, you will allow, to foresee the chance which has raised you to a station so near to the most august confidence ; and I did not, therefore, calculate upon your fortune, nor your manner of bearing that fortune.

“ When I heard of it, I was at Hamburgh, where people congratulated themselves upon it, for you are liked there ; but it was not according to my habit to write to you spontaneously on my return. Public affairs seemed to me in so active a crisis, and the sanctuary in which you are, so beset with men and things, that being unable to think I was required there to be useful—as I can, and will be, and not otherwise—I should have found myself importunate there, and out of place. I did not therefore see you. You make it a matter of reproach, which is very kind of you. But allow me, as a first reply, to defy you to repeat this reproach, if ever, which may God avert !—fortune proves inconstant to you.

“ Up to the present time, what would you have me do at Versailles?—I who am proud of my services, of my strength, and of my faults probably, since the follies of an effervescent youth were the

first spur that pressed me to pay a noble and generous tribute to my country! What would you have me do at a place where people believe that they have said every thing concerning me when they exclaim,—‘ He has great talents!—what a pity!’—As if the exclamation did not amount to this:—‘ He writes excellent things, but what a man would he be if he did not write at all!’ What should I do where I am disparaged for the very thing that does me honour, feared on account of my services, insulted on account of the talents I possess?—where I have been injured, not only in word but in deed, by the man best qualified to appreciate me, to rise above prejudice and idle reports:—by your minister, in a word, who cannot but know that a great reputation is seated only upon great calumnies? What had he to impute to me? Having contributed to overthrow the man upon whose ruin he has raised himself to supreme power!—having professed the principles which, he says, he will convert into laws!—having crushed some of the monsters of which, it is said, he will purge his country!—having shown that the implacable enemy of all authority, of all influence, and of every office but his own, had nothing great but his quackery and his ambition! These are, doubtless, very dreadful crimes!

“ So let them be, my good friend; for I do not

fret about the alarm of those who fear me, any more than I experience uneasiness about the animosity of those who hate me. Assuredly I do not deny that I am attracted, that I am seduced by circumstances which hold out a noble prospect to my country. I feel that it would be too natural and too easy for me to yield myself up wholly to the man who should give a hope that France will be constituted and therefore regenerated. But far from me the thought of offering myself to any but one whose intentions I know and approve of; far from me the imprudence of asking for the confidence of any one to whom I have not yet given mine. I solicit nothing; I covet nothing; I envy nothing. I may have been desirous of employing my activity, sure as I am that I shall serve faithfully, even usefully, by dint of zeal, application, and perseverance, and shall thus give as much as I receive. But I will never meet even half way. They would term intrigue or presumption that which is true love of the public weal, and patriotism as pure in its energy as it is disinterested in its motives.

“ Leave me, then, in my obscurity. I say my obscurity, because, in fact, it is my intention to remain invariably in obscurity, until a regular order of things has sprung from the tumult we are now in, and some great revolution, whether in good or evil, shall command a good citizen, always accountable for his suffrage, and even for his talents, to raise his voice.

This revolution cannot be long delayed. The strait which the public vessel has entered is equally short and dangerous. An able pilot can, no doubt, bring the good ship again into the open ocean, and if she once gets there, she is safe ; but she can only do this with the assistance of the crew, and, at this period, I know of no seaman who ought to be despised.

“ I do not, however, perceive that many good ones are employed at a period when the particular combinations of inventive finance constitute the first of our resources, the most urgent of our wants. I perceive nothing but incapacity and fluctuation in the financial department, uneasiness and penury in the treasury, and mistrust and discredit among the public, on the subject of the loan, without which you cannot live or even scarcely go through the year. This loan will perhaps be effected in a proper manner ; it will certainly be so if the Archbishop frames the plan of it properly. Among persons acquainted with the matter, who does not know that the mode of applying a loan and directing its distribution is more important to its success than even the conditions on which it is effected ? The entire history of our finances proves this. The only one of our loans attended with great success is that, the distribution of which has, I will not say not reached perfection, but approached the proper plan, which is entirely unknown to the old school. I here allude to the loan of a hundred and twenty-five mil-

lions, which led to five hundred millions of subscriptions. Is it at a time when, in truth, all the secrets of the art are not too many, that anything ought to be risked?—that an operation so important is to be left to routine and ignorance? The financial department is surrounded by none but old professors, whose practice, lauded by speculators interested in a continuance of the old system, and who found their wealth upon the discredit of the state, is dishonoured by the very constant languor of our loans. If to such hands the destiny of this our last sacrament is to be confided, truly I foresee the greatest misfortunes; and assuredly they may be as easily proved as predicted. Bear in mind, that in this I have and can have no other interest than the thing itself; and if the warning appears to you important—if the Archbishop, carried away by the torrent of events, has no time to apply his meditation to this particular point, let him ask for the papers written for M. de Calonne, and thereupon ground the distribution of the hundred and twenty-five millions. These writings exist; they contain all, both in theory and in practice; and I defy a man of good faith to reply to them.

“Be that as it may, my dear friend,—for I know not how I have been led into this digression,—rely upon my personal regard, my devotedness to the public thing, and even the facility which any one who becomes its useful director will find in obtaining my

undivided services. But do not ask me to go and show the face of a solicitor or a courtier*.”

At the same time, Mirabeau continued to labour actively at the “Prussian Monarchy.” To avoid a journey to Hamburgh in order to see the work through the press, he applied for permission to have it printed in France, writing personally to M. de Montmorin, a minister who had before treated him kindly.

“Do not, I entreat you, refuse me a tacit permission to print my great work, with the occasion and the subject of which you are acquainted, and the usefulness of which you have kindly predicted. You will save me a journey and expense, and you will benefit the French booksellers. On the other hand, I will render myself worthy of this confidence, by exercising myself a severer censorship than any person you could send; and I pledge you my word that in my six volumes, there shall not be a single sentence at which either France or the Emperor can reasonably take offence†.”

There is every reason to believe that this request, which in these times appears so simple, was not granted; for the “Prussian Monarchy,” the publication of which was delayed until August or September 1788, appeared as published in London. M. de Mont-

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Soufflot, dated Oct. 4th 1787.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. de Montmorin, dated October 8th 1787.

morin, however, sent for Mirabeau, who, not having time to give him a proper explanation, wrote him a letter which we here transcribe, and in which, being resolved not to connect himself with the ministerial system, at least so far as regarded the home administration, he offers himself for a mission which ministers would not give him. They pressed him to accept one which he declined, as we shall presently show; and this refusal, unknown to this day, is one of the facts that best establishes and does most honour to Mirabeau's political character, which is still misunderstood after a lapse of fifty years even by some of the most fervent admirers of his genius.

“The arrival of the Baron of Breteuil having deprived me of the honour of conversing with you a sufficient time to describe to you Germany such as I saw it, and such as most observers, by order, will *not* describe it to you,—having, still less, found an opportunity of speaking to you of myself, permit me, in what I intended to say to you, to state at least that part which is personal to myself.

“I was charged, during ten months, to give an account of Berlin and of the Prussian Monarchy. I know not whether the voluminous papers I wrote on this occasion are in your hands; but I suspect not, because M. de Vergennes, who, under the circumstances which induced him to employ me, thought that he could not begin by avowing my official character,

especially employed, in this case, the good offices of M. de Calonne, through whom my deciphered despatches reached his hands, and those of the King. But independently of the ministerial praises bestowed upon me, I affirm and offer to prove that during this period, not a single interesting fact happened that escaped me, or which I did not foretell, and draw a faithful prognostic of men and things.

“ I shall not here recal the price I received for my zeal and my labour. May it ever remain unknown, in order that good citizens may not be discouraged ! But I make bold to tell you that if, in the present perplexed situation of France, and the uncertainty of our vacillating politics, a man who bears a name well enough known for his curiosity in travelling, not to be an object of surprise, should become the medium of a more exact and rapid communication ; if a man, who, by his assiduous application, has perhaps acquired some knowledge and facility, should appear to you likely to be useful, it would be worthy of you not to be stopped by perfidious *on dits*, or frivolous considerations. I have nothing to reply to the former, except that I have always been a faithful servant, a devoted friend, a safe depositary of confidence, and that respectable persons would, if requisite, become security for me. With regard to the latter, be so good as to believe that the same talent which has struggled by the force of opinion against the public authority, is the more able to

save it when it can make him its own by a community of principles, and the tie of benefits conferred. Until the time comes when Providence shall dispose of my father, my existence and fortune can be only my own work, or that of government. Eager to be more and more useful, and to disappoint calumniators and wicked men, by a mode of existence in which I shall force them to do me justice, the executive life suits me better than the speculative, and I should prefer serving the government by acts, to risking its displeasure in my office of instructor. It is not unworthy of you to give the government a useful servant, whom so many of your predecessors have endeavoured to represent as a dangerous subject. There are posts for which you have few men, either because they have no preliminary knowledge, and are unacquainted with the northern languages, or because these places require a strong head, and great intrepidity, or talents of execution, combined with those of the closet—a combination not very common. I am as ready to risk my head as to employ it in the King's service. Warsaw, St. Petersburg, Constantinople, Alexandria, are nearly the same to me, provided I find there a useful employment of my activity. I leave it to your wisdom to determine the manner of my employment, to your equity alone to fix the remuneration. I simply offer my services, and I merely add that, being accustomed to the ingratitude of men, and the injustice of their rulers, I shall only have a stronger

sense of benefits conferred, and feel more grateful to those who confer those benefits *.”

This application was unsuccessful. Mirabeau, who could not be employed in the manner he proposed, and would not render the kind of services demanded of him, hastened by his good wishes and his personal exertions the denouement thenceforward inevitable, in which his profound sagacity saw the regeneration of France, and in which he was certain of finding a career for his patriotism, and employment for his talents. He was connected with several members of the parliament, some hostile, some favourable to the ministers. The following is his reply to one of the latter, who had written to him on the subject of the promise made, in order to obtain further loans, of a convocation of the States-general, in 1792.

“I should like to see you ; first of all, for the sake of seeing you ; next, because your year 1792 runs in my head. It is impossible that this date can inspire good citizens with confidence. If, by the force of things, 1789 is rigorously necessary, as you believe, why not ask for 1789, giving that as a reason ? If, in that, the government shows any obstinacy, why not use the word *forthwith* ? This word is a thousand times better than a distant date, for which there is no pretence, although assuredly it does not require five

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. de Montmorin, dated October 12th 1787.

years either to assemble, or to be formed, or to prepare; and the state of the nation is too critical for those who have brought it to this pass, to be allowed to live sixty months longer by expedients, and to borrow five or six hundred millions to get over a useless interval. A lustre is for this moveable country an entire cycle. The citizens will find real derision in this announcement. Keen observers will see in it a collusion between the government and the parliaments to continue to govern in the absence of the nation. What will become of you then, ye ministers and magistrates? Think you, that a vague preamble will restore credit in a country, when preambles have never been any thing but the jargon of incapacity, or the handles of evil faith?—and that, too, at a time when all contributes to discredit, when money is at an excessive premium, the public debt founded on air, and the mistrust universal—when the nation feels better each day, each hour, and each instant, its own force, and the want the government has of its concurrence? A convocation of the States-general is so strongly commanded by necessity, and so inevitable, that, with or without a prime minister, under Achilles or Thersites, it will undoubtedly take place, and thus the nation will not feel much indebted to ministers for it, whatever be the period indicated. But if the period be distant, it will be a further motive for discontent, discredit, and ill-will.

“ You who, at an age when a man scarcely escapes from the first effervescence of inconsistent youth, may take so noble a share in the revolution which will constitute France, and give it the development of its greatness—do not suffer yourself to be deceived—do not lose your noble stake. Do not, for the sake of personal advantage, endanger a game in which interest and honour are agreed—for the nation will not lose it. The impetus is such, that even those who have given it with bad intentions will no longer be in time to retreat. The age is too far advanced, and the public mind in a state of too great excitement for us to lose anything of what we have gained. As a magistrate, profit by the inconceivable order of things which has rendered France parliamentary ; as a citizen, co-operate with all your might in the great work of the constitution, and do not allow yourself to be turned from it by any illusion, by any subterfuge. As a man, ask of yourself of how many days we are sure, and defend yourself still more against delays than against precipitation ; for at most, the latter could but lead us to a few faults, which would not prevent us from being mature at the period of the revolution which will thus take place ; but the former might cause some dreadful shocks. *Vale, spes altera Romæ* *.”

L. C. D. M.

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau, dated November 18th 1787. The text, which the reader has just seen, is copied verbatim from an

The political crisis approached nearer and nearer. After the exile of the Parliament to Troyes, the Archbishop of Toulouse passing rapidly from violence to weakness, withdrew the two edicts on the territorial subvention, and the stamp duties ; and on the 10th of December, twenty-five days after the order of exile, he recalled the magistrates with the more eagerness, because they cried out loudly against despotism, and called upon the nation to resist,—and because, on the other hand, depending upon the promises of some, the minister fancied he had attained the point indicated in the above letter : that is to say, he was persuaded that all of them, to obtain their recal, would yield to the proposal of a gradual loan, of four hundred and forty millions, to be realised in four years, and contracted on the condition a convocation of the States-general.

Being consulted by another magistrate, Mirabeau wrote—

“ I have reflected much upon the state of things and upon your personal situation. To this meditation, besides the energy of a soul that lives in the *beau idéal* of the public good, and of a mind long exercised on objects of this nature, I have brought the interest inspired by your talents, your destiny, and your con-

autograph rough copy, without a superscription, and we are not sufficiently sure of the destination of this letter to offer any conjecture as to the name of the party to whom it was written.

fidence, that irresistible attraction for good hearts. I have considered, under every aspect, the man, yourself, and the thing. My opinion has always been the same. I think I am right, and so long as my nature remains unchanged, I shall continue to think so. The following is the conclusion to which I have come :—

“ It is impossible to support the Archbishop of Toulouse in the plan we know of; to attempt it would be dishonouring yourselves for no good.

“ To register this enormous loan, the legal necessity of which cannot be shown, and which it is impossible you can avoid blaming except by taking as a pretence that you have had no time to examine and judge of it ;—to register this loan by an edict that carries with it a tacit registration of three other loans, and offers the nation an unnecessary aggravation of debt of nearly five hundred millions; to register this loan on a mere verbal promise made under an insidious form, to convoke, before the expiration of five years, the States-general, would, under any other circumstances, be a thing, perhaps, impossible to an honest man; but it is in my opinion a proposal very dangerous to every magistrate who not only cannot depend upon the security of a majority, but who, in all human probability, must anticipate a disgraceful minority, which that minister too richly deserves, whose conduct cannot be explained, except by supposing that he intends to seize a pretence for effecting a bankruptcy, and raising the standard of despotism.

In vain will votes be counted. At first, and on ordinary occasions, it is by no means proved that the minister would have even a division ; but it would be a very unreasonable presumption, to believe it possible for him to monopolise a majority, at a time when opposition is so much in fashion, and the excitement so general ; at a juncture when fear makes people brave, and self-love makes them incendiaries, and which brings matters to such a pass, that even those who are bought, if there be any, will be faithless without perfidy.

“ Certainly, war has its dangers ; but it has none to be compared, especially for a public man, to a desertion of the public thing. What will the Archbishop do ? Will he make the nation a bankrupt ? This is not in his power any more than the money itself. Will he fulminate forth proscriptions ? Martyrs of every kind are the seed of martyrs ; and were even Cardinal Richelieu present, his times would not be present. Will the Archbishop wage war against the nation ? If so the business will soon be settled. He has given out his measures ; he will step backward and fall to the ground. His fall will produce private evils, for some individuals will be crushed by the ruins ; but they who step on one side, will assuredly risk less than those who ventured to advance and prop up the building.

“ If you speak, make the moderation of the results pass, by the energy of the details. But however well disposed you may be towards the Archbishop of

Toulouse and peace, you cannot, without destroying your reputation, speak with more indulgence than in the following sense:—‘ Let us leave this loan to the King’s wisdom, for his parliament cannot judge of its necessity—let him, therefore, decide upon it in his wisdom, provided that, by a prudent and paternal convocation of the States-general in 1789, the parliament has the certainty that the loan of a hundred and twenty millions is in reality only provisional, and the only one which it will be called upon to sanction, until the time when the assembled nation shall know its own wants, decree its own duties, exercise its own rights, and unfold its own resources.’

“ It cannot be said that such counsel is incendiary, since it grants the provisional loan on reasonable and moderate conditions. It cannot be said that it is cowardly, as it stipulates on behalf of the nation before the King himself. It is capable of setting talents and wisdom to work. Believe me, do not go beyond the line I have traced, for you would do no one any good, and yourselves a prodigious deal of harm. Time is no longer when a private individual could indemnify a man for the loss of public esteem ; and the day is about to dawn when the suffrage of the nation will suffice to make of an able man a very great citizen. *Vale et me ama*. If you wish to see me, I shall be at your orders day and night *.”

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau, dated November 18th 1787.

This judicious and bold language was not addressed to a solitary magistrate only ; whatever co-operation he expected from this and several others, he had, nevertheless, too much sagacity to found a solid confidence on the collective body of a parliament already brought into disrepute, at least among people of sense, by its frequent vacillation, and by the inconsistencies into which it was led in turn by pride and the want of popularity, selfishness, and a spirit of systematic opposition ; of a parliament, in short, which would promote the public good only on condition that no sacrifice was required of it, and which really possessed no patriotism except in opposition to the King's ministers.

Far, therefore, from placing any dependence upon the parliament, and foreseeing that the public cause would obtain from it nothing but a noisy, precarious, and, at the same time, sterile and dangerous support, Mirabeau applied to the government itself to point out and advise the line of conduct imposed by reason and necessity, prudence and sound policy.

Thus, forgetting the personal reasons he had to complain, and seeing only the actual and coming results of the sitting of November 19th, at which the loan of four hundred and twenty millions was refused, and the King braved to his face by an almost unanimous opposition, at the head of which appeared the Duke of Orleans, Mirabeau wrote the very next day the following letter to M. de Montmorin.

“ The loan is rejected—it could not have been otherwise. To register a loan, the lawful necessity of which cannot be shown, and which the parliament could not have refrained from calling absurd, except by stating that they had not had time to examine and judge of it ; to register a progressive loan which offers to the nation an increase of debt to the amount of about five hundred millions ; to register a loan which violates every principle of decency and prudence, by exposing the weakness of the throne, without taking any account of the circumstances that may always occur, and the possibility of which must never be lost sight of, such as the rigour of the seasons, the great calamities of nature, or a war by sea and land, unhappily too probable, and not less dreadful than the other scourges ; to register such a loan with the sole exchange of a vague promise—would be a thing impossible even to the ministerial party. The loan is rejected ; so it ought. What are they going to do?—Good God ! What are they going to do?—is asked by the alarmed citizens. And as, for every mind of the least energy, the answer is not doubtful ; as the suspension of payments, and soon after, retrenchments in the public debt are inevitable, according to the prime minister’s plan ; and as you, the honest man of the administration—you, whom we all consider a good citizen and a personal friend of the King, must not desert the throne and deceive public expectation in this

alarming crisis, I thought it due to your reputation, to the kindness you have shown me, and to the attachment with which this kindness has inspired me, and lastly to myself, as I shall not remain mute amid the desolation of my country, to send you a few brief reflections on the horrible proposal about to be submitted to the council, to endeavour to obtain from it the security which its abetting the measure might produce.

“ ‘Let us suspend our payments,’ ministers say, ‘as they refuse us provisional loans. Let us cut into the debt, since we cannot equalise the receipts and disbursements!’

“ Thus, a Monarch, remarkable for his goodness, would abjure his most sacred engagements, and forget on a sudden that the simple word of a King ought to be worth more than the oath of another man! . . . More than one courtier will doubtless maintain, that this operation must promote the happiness of the sovereign and that of the people. They would be bold enough to talk to his Majesty about public good and justice, when they urged him to realise the wish of Caligula*.

* We have already quoted what, in 1777, Mirabeau said of this monster, and he alludes to him in a writing subsequent to the above letter in the text.

“ When Caligula wished that the Roman people had but one head, that he might have the pleasure of cutting it off, he manifested at once both the aim and the impotency of despotism.”—*Reply to the Alarms of the good Citizens*, p. 42.

For is it not killing two hundred thousand citizens at a single blow, when they are reduced by the same decree, to the execrable alternative of dying from starvation, or living by crime?

“ Thus then, is it to depend upon a government’s will to wreck itself by plague, war, or earthquakes? No! it is repugnant to human nature, to the destiny and the essence of society. For a King to let his subjects starve, or drive them to starvation, which is still more atrocious, is to confess that he is not able to govern them—it is renouncing his right over them. What then would become of so many unfortunate men, excited by the irresistible instinct of self-preservation, and so many annuitants, lenders on security, and creditors inhumanly despoiled of the fruits of their savings, imprudently left without bread by the sudden overthrow of their debtors’ fortunes, and consequently free from all check, from all moral restraint? What terror would be inspired by these unhappy persons, whom all who had nothing to lose would join? Might they not become incendiary enemies of the state, and more especially of the King? Is the fanaticism of misery less ardent than that of property, and are both less inextinguishable than that of religion?

“ That which at least no one will dare to deny is that, in a great kingdom like France, the frightful phantom of bankruptcy should never appear unless pre-

ceded by inexorable necessity. It should first be proved that we are without resources for the present and the future; that we have no means of reviving our credit, or that it would be dangerous to attempt it—all of which is so far from true, that it would be ridiculous to make it matter of discussion. The English support a national debt much greater than ours, spread over a population not half so numerous; and every year they extinguish a portion of it. By what pusillanimity, or rather, by what dishonourable baseness should we give way to despair,—we, to whom nature has been much more bountiful?—we, who might find immense resources by extirpating a host of abuses unknown to our rivals?—we, over whom they have only one advantage, that of having a constitution? Are we not about to have a constitution? Why should we complain of the present low state of public credit, when men's purses are shut with regret, and their owners to open them again, are waiting only for a word from the sovereign, calling upon the nation to examine, consent to, and liquidate the public debt?

“The crime in preparation, which would make us forfeit the respect of all Europe, where we should no longer be looked upon but as a country without an army, without finances, without honour, and a prey to the first occupant—the crime in preparation is not only absurd, but, fortunately, impossible. It is clear that the holders of public stock would meet as in 1648;

and this new association would be much more imposing than the former, because it would be much more numerous, and because the men of the present day are better informed of their duties than they were at that period. It is evident that the parliaments, having to reproach themselves with the registration of so many taxes, and so many loans, would expiate their past errors and increase their popularity, by authorising the creditors of the state to seize upon the property hypothecated by their contracts. It is evident that the receivers of the King's money would not dare to oppose this, being pressed, from one extremity of the kingdom to the other, by the double authority of public opinion and of the magistrates. . . . That which would infallibly result from an undertaking so barbarous and so dangerous, would be remorse at having begun it, and shame at being compelled to give it up.

“ What then must be done ?

“ Announce in precise and solemn terms the convocation of the States-general in 1789, for you can no longer do without them. In vain would you delay the period : the weight of the debt would not be lightened by it, because the national honour would certainly prevent the States-general from adopting any diminution, that might be planned ; I say diminution,—for to plan anything further would be to conceive the abominable intention of provoking the most

violent of seditions. By an adjournment which the force of circumstances would soon cause to be retracted, independently of any call for it—by a delay which, besides, would leave everything either in stagnation or in anarchy—by a distant date, I say, you would only lose the fruit of so august a declaration. The year in which the King assembles the nation, will be incontestibly the finest of his life. Everybody knows that he has been deceived, and could not help being so; and everybody will do justice to his intentions. Like Louis XII and Henry IV, he will find nothing in this noble act but consolation and praise; and France, regenerated at home, and exalted abroad, will surround its Monarch with the rays of its own glory. Yes!—at the very mention of the States-general in 1789, you will see credit revive, and fill up the loan which the present state of affairs requires. It is true that the parliament has no right to register a loan without the consent of the States-general, because the principal and interest cannot be paid except by taxation,—and the assembled nation has alone a right to vote a tax. Why should we attempt to disguise this, when nobody doubts it any longer? But, seconded by the public suffrage which will, in such a case, allow the parliament to exceed its powers, this body will lend itself to all the means which His Majesty may think proper to employ, even to the convocation of the States; and if, by an impossibility, it refused, the indignation of every good

citizen would prove sufficient to punish it according to its deserts.

“ The two alternatives, one of which the council will soon have to select for the King, are as follows : either a culpable and infinitely dangerous *coup-d'état*, or an act of beneficence, which is indispensably necessary . . . Can they hesitate between such alternatives ?—can they make the least comparison between the two ?

“ I swear, Sir, on my conscience, and by my Creator, that the following is the calmest, the most moderate, and the most subdued form of what can be said concerning the state of things to which the incapacity of the prime minister has brought us : it is the least sinister portion of what may be prognosticated to the King.—Dishonoured abroad, furious at home, held in derision by others and in horror by ourselves, dangerous only to our rulers,—such shall we become, if the King shows the least intention to fail in his engagements If this picture could leave without dread those strong-minded men who have led us on to this fatal point,—have they, I would ask, well calculated the convulsions of starvation and the genius of despair ? Who will dare to answer for the consequences as regards the personal safety of those who surround the throne, and even that of the King himself ? Ah, Sir, say the word, and our intrepid incendiaries will soon knock their pale and livid brows upon the ground ! As for you, not only will your debt be acquitted, but

the respect in which you are held shall increase a hundred-fold, and your strength with it. You well know that the time is past when the favour of a King was sufficient to create the renown of a minister, or his displeasure to crush that minister. Now, true glory is derived from another and a higher source,—in future, the nation alone will raise up political fortunes Read over and over again, I entreat you in the name of our country, these hastily written lines, which I send you in the strictest confidence. Decide upon what you will do, by your conscience rather than by your wisdom. There are times when courage is prudence, when half-measures are crimes, when silence is dishonourable. Speak then,—say every thing; and if you are not understood, resign, in order that you may not, in office, survive the dishonour of the government, and incur the imputation of having assisted at a deliberation that decreed the disgrace of France. How many blessings, and, sooner or later, how much prosperity, will atone for a day, even doubtful, of anger or disgrace, and how noble will it be to succeed the slayer of his country, and punish or remedy his crime *.”

Nothing, assuredly, is wanting in this noble defence of the national cause, which seems to us to display Mirabeau's energetic patriotism in a most beautiful light.

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. de Montmorin, dated November 20th 1787.

But we also used the word “prophecy,” and we ask if it were possible to foretel with greater precision the acts of a minister equally incapable and immoral, who, on the 16th of August following, suspended the payments of the royal treasury. The effect of this measure was instantaneous: it overthrew the Archbishop of Toulouse.

Meanwhile, however pressing Mirabeau’s arguments, they were not powerful enough to convince M. de Montmorin, an honest, but timid and weak minister. The government still thought it could do without the States-general; it saw no very decided obstacle to its views except in the parliament. This body had acquired great popularity from the faults committed by the government and its strenuous opposition to the ministers. M. de Montmorin was therefore anxious that his bold and clear sighted adviser should embrace the cause of government and write against the parliament. The minister’s request was urgent, and Mirabeau’s very decided refusal is, as we have already observed, so honourable to his memory, and so well establishes his political character, too often calumniated, that we consider ourselves fortunate in being able to give publicity to an authentic document, which nobody has hitherto seen, nor even suspected its existence. It will enable the reader still better to form a just estimate of the sagacity, courage, and wisdom displayed by Mirabeau under such important

circumstances: of his sagacity, for he found in the strength and correctness of his judgment the certain foreknowledge of the impolitic violence * about to be employed to punish a resistance which could not be either disarmed, overcome, or eluded; of his courage, for courage was necessary to say to the government, you meditate an act either of madness or of dishonesty; of his wisdom, for, had he been listened to, he would have brought the King to see the advantage of taking the lead in a measure which could not be avoided, and thereby acquiring popularity, instead of losing the merit of doing that which he could not prevent, and increasing his danger by the hesitation of the government and the delay of a whole year.

The following is Mirabeau's reply to M. de Montmorin :—

“ I have received with gratitude the enclosure you have kindly sent me of the remonstrances by the Parliament, together with his Majesty's reply. This is a natural and imperious opportunity of explaining myself with regard to the work you request me to write.

“ In the first place, to point out the first difficulty: such a work—and I have well considered the matter—is not of a nature to be either written or published hastily. The principles to be laid down are so delicate

* The letter we are about to transcribe is dated a fortnight before the terrible scene of the arrest, in full parliament, of Messrs. d'Espréménil and Goislard de Monsabert.

and the public so little prepared for them, that they can have no solid foundation but upon facts. Now, research for facts requires time far beyond the period you have indicated. Assuredly, a mere commonplace production, especially by me, could not answer your purpose; the public cause would gain nothing, and I should lose much.

“ And, indeed, without taking into consideration the personal danger I run, by incurring the implacable hatred of those bodies which are not overthrown, and will devour numbers of their enemies before they are—or rather, and to speak more plainly, which will never be overthrown so long as they are attacked without the assistance of the nation—is the very period when the King has not disdained himself to denounce an aristocracy of magistrates, a seasonable moment for having this same aristocracy denounced to France by another? Can any one, at the present time, usefully serve the government by wearing its livery? Is it a proper time to wage war in favour of the administration, when ministers have not feared to make the King deliver a speech with which France will resound, and from which, in sound logic, it is to be inferred that the will of the monarch is good law? Can it be believed, that they who lay down such principles are sincerely willing to assemble, and are preparing to call together the States-general? I have had the honour, Sir, of saying to you, and I have repeated to the keeper of the seals: ‘ I will never wage war with

the parliaments except in the presence of the nation.' There, and there alone, can they be restored and reduced to their original character of simple ministers of justice. But if, in the place of the rights they have usurped from us, we do not see a constitution spring up, sanctioned by our own consent, who, among honest men, would efface the last traces of our dying liberties? If the will of one man is henceforth to become the law in the monarchy, what need have we to meddle with the disputes which arise between the Monarch and the ministers of his will? What have we to lose by such a war?—or rather, why should we not encourage the resistance of the only bodies which have retained means of compromising with this formidable will?

“ Ah! Sir, I have already had the honour to tell you that the government which should render France parliamentary would be very injudicious!—the conduct would be inexplicable which should tend to so dangerous a measure. Could we not, from this time until the meeting of the States-general, virtually do without the parliaments? Why then should we be in a hurry to do without them by law, if it is really meant to assemble the nation? How suspicious would such haste appear? If the nation is deprived of the phantom which it has long considered the guardian of its rights, without calling upon it to watch over the preservation and exercise of these rights, it will not believe that you destroy to build up again, and that

the ambition of these bodies is put down in order to give the kingdom a constitution; but it will think that you are rushing on to absolute despotism, to the most simple form of arbitrary power. He would be very rash who should reply that, under such circumstances, exaggerated by public mistrust, envenomed by the evil-disposed, there will be no insurrection; and if one happens, it is not given to human wisdom to calculate the consequences.

“ If, on the contrary, a system truly national is substituted for the superannuated language of arbitrary authority, all difficulties will vanish of themselves. Do you not see, Sir, that at the very first solemn word that shall indicate the precise period of the meeting of the States-general, all will be quieted?—that the good citizens and peaceable men—that those Frenchmen who are not yet disgusted with the monarchy because they feel that France is geographically monarchical, will be filled with hope and docility at the very instant this word is uttered?—that no means whatever will be left for turbulent men, and for the bodies to excite the least trouble, until the National Assembly is formed?—that if the government requires momentary assistance, and a temporary credit, the readiest mode of obtaining both is to assemble the States-general, because these latter are equally necessary as the only resource left to the finance department, and as the only means of constituting the kingdom, and *vice versá*?—that, in a

word, in all this there are no other difficulties than those you have yourselves raised, or which result from that dreadful disease of ministers, never to make up their minds to give to-day that which will be infallibly forced from them to-morrow ?

“ No, Sir !—the moment for waging a paper war with the parliaments is not yet come. The government is mistrusted, and with too good reason : let it recover the confidence of the nation (and assuredly it can no longer do so, except by calling upon the nation to inquire into its own affairs, and to decree the assistance which they require) ; let it recover the confidence of the nation : on a sudden the parliaments, by the sole force of things, will be reduced to their true standard ; their culpable intrigues will fail ; their mad provocations will receive due punishment. . . . All the strength of these bodies lies in the distress of the government and the discontent of the nation.

“ Such, Sir, is a very concise summary of the reflections dictated to me by a sincere wish to be of use to you, combined with events and the respect I owe to myself. Do not make a zealous servant commit himself, who, when the time comes for him to devote himself to his country, will count the danger as nothing—but who for all the thrones in the world will never prostitute his name in support of an equivocal cause of which the end is uncertain, the principle doubtful, and the progress dark and alarming. Should

I not lose the whole of those feeble talents the influence of which you exaggerate, if I renounced that inflexible independence which alone has given me some success, and which alone can render me useful to my country and my Sovereign? The day on which, under the inspiration of my conscience, strong in my conviction, and as a pure citizen, a faithful subject, and a virgin writer, I join in the *melée*, I shall be able to say— ‘Listen to a man who has never varied in his principles, nor deserted the public cause *.’”

God forbid that we should add any comment to this noble profession of faith! It is sufficient for us to present it as the programme of Mirabeau’s whole political life. A feeling of pious reserve even forbids our giving it all the effect which we might do; for such is the melancholy nature of the numerous domestic documents before us, that we could easily prove that at the very time Mirabeau declined the lucrative employment offered to him, he was a prey to the privations of real and deep poverty, the sufferings of which were aggravated by a long illness of Madame de Nehra, to whom he paid attentions so assiduous that he fell ill himself, and nearly died.

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. de Montmorin, dated April 18th 1788.

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